THEORY

OF

MORAL SENTIMENTS;

OR,

An ESSAY towards an Analysis of the Principles by which Men naturally judge concerning the Conduct and Character, first of their Neighbours, and afterwards of themselves.

TO WHICH IS ADDED ,

A Differtation on the Origin of Languages.

By ADAM SMITH, LL. D.

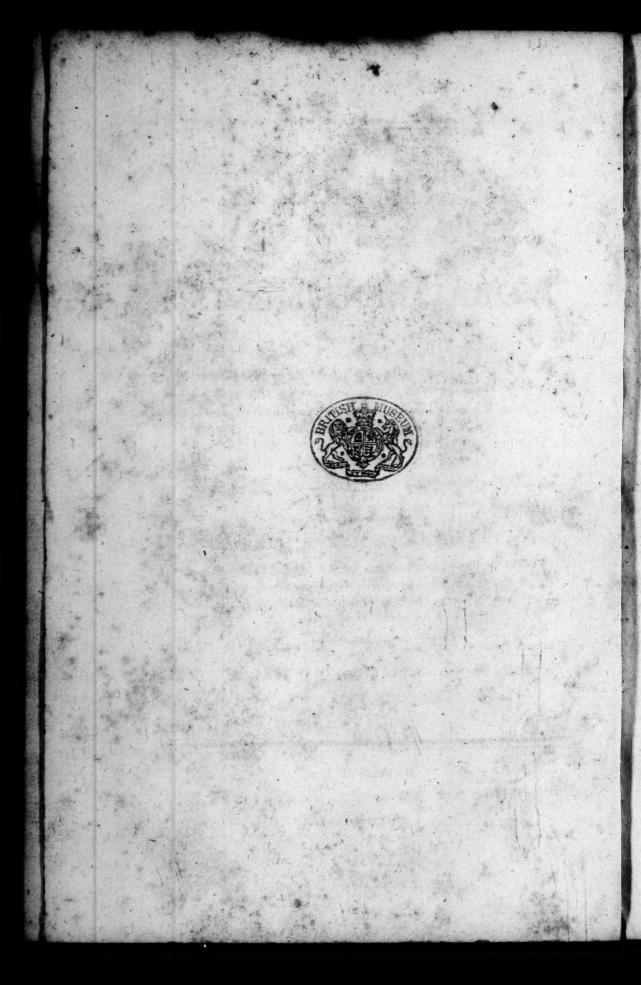
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CONTENTS

OFTHE

SECOND VOLUME.

PART V.

OF the INFLUENCE of CUSTOM and FASHION upon the Sentiments of Moral Approbation and Disapprobation.

CHAP. I. Of the Influence of Custom and Fashion upon our notions of Beauty and Deformity. Page 1 CHAP. II. Of the Influence of Custom and Fashion upon Moral Sentiments.

PART VI

Of the CHARACTER of VIRTUE:

INTRODUCTION.

Page 35

SECTION I

Of the Character of the Individual, fo far as it affects his own Happiness; or of Prudence. 36

SECTION IL

Of the Character of the Individual, fo far as it can affect the Happiness of other People,

INTRODUCTION.

47

CHAP. I. Of the Order in which Individuals are recommended by Nature to our Care and Attention.

49

CHAP. II. Of the Order in which Societies are by
Nature recommended to our Beneficence.

CHAP. III. Of universal Benevolence.

79

SECTION III.

Of Self-command.
Conclusion of the SIXTH PARTS

PART VIL

Of systems of moral philosophy.

SECTION I:

Of the Questions which ought to be examined in a Theory of Moral Sentiments. Page 135

SECTION IL

Of the different Accounts which have been given of the Nature of Virtue.

INTRODUCT	ion.	138
CHAP. I.	Of those Systems which make	Virtue confis
in Propri	ety.	140
CHAP. II.	Of those Systems which make	Virtue confist
in Prude	nce.	185
CHAP. III.	Of those Systems which make	Virtue confist
in Beneve	olence.	196
CHAP. IV.	Of licentious Systems	207

SECTION III.

Of the different Systems which have been formed concerning the Principle of Approbation.

INTRODUCTION.

Page 222

CHAP. I. Of those Systems which deduce the Principle of Approbation from Self-love. 223
CHAP. II. Of those Systems which make Reason the Principle of Approbation. 228
CHAP. III. Of those Systems which make Sentiment the Principle of Approbation. 234

SECTION IV.

Of the Manner in which different Authors have treated of the practical Rules of Morality. 246

6 NO 61

Considerations concerning the first Formation of Languages, and the different Genius of original and compounded Languages. 275

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MORAL SENTIMENTS.

PART V.

Of the INFLUENCE of GUSTOM and FASHION upon the Sentiments of Moral Approbation and Disapprobation.

Confisting of One Section.

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CHAP. I. we him , munts

Of the Influence of Custom and Fashion upon our notions of Beauty and Deformity.

THERE are other principles besides those already enumerated, which have a considerable influence upon the moral sentiments of mankind, and are the chief causes of the many irregular and discordant opinions which prevail in different ages and nations concerning what is blamable or praise-Vol. II.

worthy. These principles are custom and fashion, principles which extend their dominion over our judgments concerning beauty of every kind.

When two objects have frequently been feen together, the imagination acquires a habit of paffing eafily from the one to the other. If the first appear, we lay our account that the second is Of their own accord they put us in to follow. mind of one another, and the attention glides eafily along them. Though, independent of cuftom, there should be no real beauty in their union, vet when custom has thus connected them together, we feel an impropriety in their separation. The one we think is awkward when it appears without its usual companion. We miss something which we expected to find, and the habitual arrangement of our ideas is disturbed by the disappointment. A fuit of clothes, for example, feems to want fomething if they are without the most infignificant ornament which usually accompanies them, and we find a meanness or awkwardness in the absence even of a haunch button. When there is any natural propriety in the union, custom increases our sense of it, and makes a different arrangement appear still more disagreeable than it would otherwise seem to be. Those who have been accustomed to see things in a good taste, are more difgusted by whatever is clumfy or awkward. Where the conjunction is improper, custom either diminishes, or takes away altogether, our sense of the impropriety. Those who have been accustomed to flovenly diforder lose all sense of neatness or elegance.

The modes of furniture or dress which seem ridiculous to strangers, give no offence to the people who are used to them.

Fashion is different from custom, or rather is a particular species of it. That is not the fashion which every body wears, but which those wear who are of a high rank, or character. The graceful, the eafy, and commanding manners of the great, joined to the usual richness and magnificence of their drefs, give a grace to the very form which they happen to bestow upon it. As long as they continue to use this form, it is connected in our imaginations with the idea of fomething that is genteel and magnificent, and though in itself it should be indifferent, it seems, on account of this relation, to have fomething about it that is genteel and magnificent too. As foon as they drop it, it loses all the grace, which it had appeared to-poffefs before, and being now used only by the inferior ranks of people, feems to have fomething of their meanness and awkwardness.

Dress and furniture are allowed by all the world to be entirely under the dominion of custom and fashion. The influence of those principles, however, is by no means confined to so narrow a sphere, but extends itself to whatever is in any respect the object of taste, to music, to poetry, to architecture. The modes of dress and furniture are continually changing, and that sashion appearing ridiculous to day which was admired five years ago, we are experimentally convinced that it owed its vogue chiefly or entirely to custom

and fashion. Clothes and furniture are not made of very durable materials. A well-fancied coat is done in a twelve-month, and cannot continue longer to propagate, as the fashion, that form according to which it was made. The modes of furniture change less rapidly than those of dress. because furniture is commonly more durable. In five or fix years, however, it generally undergoes an entire revolution, and every man in his own time fees the fashion in this respect change many different ways. The productions of the other arts are much more lasting, and, when happily imagined, may continue to propagate the fashion of their make for a much longer time. A wellcontrived building may endure many centuries: a beautiful air may be delivered down by a fort of tradition, through many fuccessive generations: a well-written poem may last as long as the world; and all of them continue for ages together, to give the vogue to that particular style, to that particular tafte or manner, according to which each of them was composed. Few men have an opportunity of feeing in their own times the fashion in any of these arts change very considerably. Few men have fo much experience and acquaintance with the different modes which have obtained in remote ages and nations, as to be thoroughly reconciled to them, or to judge with impartiality between them, and what takes place in their own age and country. Few men therefore are willing to allow, that custom or fashion have much influence upon their judgments

concerning what is beautiful, or otherwise, in the productions of any of those arts; but imagine, that all the rules, which they think ought to be observed in each of them, are founded upon reason and nature, not upon habit or prejudice. A very little attention, however, may convince them of the contrary, and satisfy them, that the influence of custom and sashion over dress and furniture, is not more absolute than over archi-

tecture, poetry, and music.

Can any reason, for example, be affigned why the Doric capital should be appropriated to a pillar, whose height is equal to eight diameters; the Ionic volute to one of nine; and the Corinthian foliage to one of ten? The propriety of each of those appropriations can be founded upon nothing but habit and custom. The eye having been used to see a particular proportion connected with a particular ornament, would be offended if they were not joined together. Each of the five orders has its peculiar ornaments, which cannot be changed for any other, without giving offence to all those who know any thing of the rules of architecture. According to some architects, indeed, fuch is the exquisite judgment with which the ancients have affigned to each order its proper ornaments, that no others can be found which are equally fuitable. It feems, however, a little difficult to be conceived that these forms, though, no doubt extremely agreeable, should be the only forms which can suit

those proportions, or that there should not be five hundred others which, antecedent to established custom, would have fitted them equally well. When cuftom, however, has established particular rules of building, provided they are not absolutely unreasonable, it is absurd to think of altering them for others which are only equally good, or even for others which, in point of elegance and beauty, have naturally fome little advantage over them, A man would be ridiculous who should appear in public with a fuit of clothes quite different from those which are commonly worn, though the new dress should in itself be ever so graceful or convenient. And there feems to be an abfurdity of the fame kind in ornamenting a house after a quite different manner from that which custom and fashion have prescribed; though the new ornaments should in themselves be somewhat fuperior to the common ones.

According to the ancient rhetoricians, a certain measure or verse was by nature appropriated to each particular species of writing, as being naturally expressive of that character, sentiment, or passion, which ought to predominate in it. One verse, they said, was sit for grave and another for gay works, which could not, they thought, be interchanged without the greatest impropriety. The experience of modern times, however, seems to contradict this principle, though in itself it would appear to be extremely probable. What is the burlesque verse in English, is the heroic verse in French. The tragedies of Racine and

the Henriad of Voltaire, are nearly in the same verse with,

Let me have your advice in a weighty affair.

The burlesque verse in French, on the contrary, is pretty much the same with the heroic verse of ten syllables in English. Custom has made the one nation associate the ideas of gravity, sublimity, and seriousness, to that measure which the other has connected with whatever is gay, slippant, and ludicrous. Nothing would appear more absurd in English, than a tragedy written in the Alexandrine verses of the French; or in French, than a work of the same kind in verses of ten syllables.

An eminent artist will bring about a considerable change in the established modes of each of those arts, and introduce a new fashion of writing, music, or architecture. As the dress of an agreeable man of high rank recommends itself, and how peculiar and fantaftical foever, comes foon to be admired and imitated; fo the excellencies of an eminent mafter recommend his peculiarities, and his manner becomes the fashionable style in the art which he practifes. The tafte of the Italians in music and architecture has, within these fifty years, undergone a confiderable change, from imitating the peculiarities of some eminent masters in each of those arts. Seneca is accused by Quintilian of having corrupted the taste of the Romans, and of having introduced a frivolous prettiness in the room of majestic reason and masculine eloquence.

Sallust and Tacitus have by others been charged with the same accusation, though in a different manner. They gave reputation, it is pretended, to a flyle, which though in the highest degree concife, elegant, expressive, and even poetical, wanted, however, eafe, fimplicity, and nature, and was evidently the production of the most labored and fludied affectation. How many great qualities must that writer possess, who can thus render his very faults agreeable? After the praise of refining the taste of a nation, the highest eulogy, perhaps, which can be bestowed upon any author, is to fay, that he corrupted it. In our own language Mr. Pope and Dr. Swift have each of them introduced a manner different from what was practifed before, into all works that are written in rhyme, the one in long verses, the other in short. The quaintness of Butler has given place to the plainness of Swift. The rambling freedom of Dryden, and the correct but often tedious and profaic languer of Addison, are no longer the objects of imitation, but all long verses are now written after the manner of the nervous precision of Mr. Pope.

Neither is it only over the productions of the arts, that custom and fashion exert their dominion. They influence our judgments, in the same manner, with regard to the beauty of natural objects. What various and opposite forms are deemed beautiful in different species of things? The proportions which are admired in one animal, are altogether different from those

which are esteemed in another. Every class of things has its own peculiar conformation, which is approved of, and has a beauty of its own, distinct from that of every other species. It is upon this account that a learned Jesuit, father Buffier, has determined that the beauty of every object confifts in that form and color, which is most usual among things of that particular fort to which it belongs. Thus, in the human form, the beauty of each feature lies in a certain middle, equally removed from a variety of other forms that are ugly. A beautiful nose, for example, is one that is neither very long, nor very fhort, neither very straight, nor very crooked, but a fort of middle among all these extremes, and less different from any one of them, than all of them are from one another. It is the form which Nature seems to have aimed at in them all, which, however, she deviates from in a great variety of ways, and very feldom hits exactly; but to which all those deviations still bear a very strong resemblance. When a number of drawings are made after one pattern, though they may all miss it in some respects, yet they will all refemble it more than they refemble one another; the general character of the pattern will run through them all; the most singular and odd will be those which are most wide of it; and though very few will copy it exactly, yet the most accurate delineations will bear a greater resemblance to the most careless, than the careless ones will bear to one another. In the same manner, in each species of creatures, what is

most beautiful bears the strongest characters of the general fabric of the species, and has the strongest resemblance to the greater part of the individuals with which it is classed. Monsters, on the contrary, or what is perfectly deformed, are always most fingular and odd, and have the least resemblance to the generality of that species to which they belong. And thus the beauty of each species, though in one fense the rarest of all things, because few individuals hit this middle form exactly, yet in another, is the most common, because all the deviations from it resemble it more than they resemble one another. The most customary form, therefore, is in each species of things, according to him, the most beautiful. And hence it is that a certain practice and experience in contemplating each species of objects is requisite, before we can judge of its beauty, or know wherein the middle and most usual form consists. The nicest judgment concerning the beauty of the human species, will not help us to judge of that of flowers, or horses, or any other species of things. It is for the same reason that in different climates, and where different customs and ways of living take place, as the generality of any species receives a different conformation from those circumstances, so different ideas of its beauty prevail. The beauty of a Moorish is not exactly the same with that of an English horse. What different ideas are formed in different nations concerning the beauty of the human shape and countenance? A fair

complexion is a shocking deformity upon the coast of Guinea. Thick lips and a flat nose are a beauty. In some nations long ears that hang down upon the shoulders are the objects of universal admiration. In China if a lady's foot is fo large as to be fit to walk upon, she is regarded as a monster of ugliness. Some of the savage nations in North-America tie four boards round the heads of their children, and thus squeeze them, while the bones are tender and griftly, into a form that is almost perfectly square. Europeans are aftonished at the absurd barbarity of this practice, to which fome missionaries have imputed the fingular flupidity of those nations among whom it prevails. But when they condemn those favages, they do not reflect that the ladies in Europe had, till within these very few years, been endeavouring, for near a century past, to squeeze the beautiful roundness of their natural shape into a square form of the same kind. And that, notwithstanding the many distortions and diseases which this practice was known to occasion, custom had rendered it agreeable among some of the most civilized nations which, perhaps, the world ever beheld.

Such is the fystem of this learned and ingenious Father, concerning the nature of beauty; of which the whole charm, according to him, would thus feem to arise from its falling in with the habits which custom had impressed upon the imagination, with regard to things of each particular kind. I cannot, however, be induced

12 OF THE INFLUENCE Part V.

to believe that our fense even of external beauty is founded altogether on custom. The utility of any form, its fitness for the useful purposes for which it was intended, evidently recommends it, and renders it agreeable to us, independent of custom. Certain colors are more agreeable than others, and give more delight to the eye the first time it ever beholds them. A smooth surface is more agreeable than a rough one. Variety is more pleafing than a tedious undiverlified uniformity. Connected variety, in which each new appearance feems to be introduced by what went before it, and in which all the adjoining parts feem to have fome natural relation to one another, is more agreeable than a disjoined and diforderly affemblage of unconnected objects. But though I cannot admit that custom is the sole principle of beauty, yet I can fo far allow the truth of this ingenious system as to grant, that there is scarce any one external form fo beautiful as to please, if quite contrary to custom and unlike whatever we have been used to in that particular species of things: or so deformed as not to be agreeable, if custom uniformly fupports it, and habituates us to fee it in every fingle individual of the kind.

CHAP. II.

Of The Influence of Custom and Fashion upon Moral Sentiments.

DINCE our fentiments concerning beauty of every kind, are so much influenced by custom and fashion, it cannot be expected, that those, concerning the beauty of conduct, should be entirely exempted from the dominion of those principles. Their influence here, however, seems to be much less than it is every where else. There is perhaps, no form of external objects, how abfurd and fantastical soever, to which custom will not reconcile us, or which fashion will not render even agreeable. But the characters and conduct of a Nero, or a Claudius, are what no custom will ever reconcile us to, what no fashion will ever render agreeable; but the one will always be the object of dread and hatred; the other of fcorn and derifion. The principles of the imagination, upon which our fense of beauty depends, are of a very nice and delicate nature, and may easily be altered by habit and education: but the fentiments of moral approbation and disapprobation, are founded on the strongest and most vigorous passions of human nature; and though they may be fomewhat warpt, cannot be entirely perverted.

But though the influence of custom and fashion upon moral sentiments, is not altogether so

great, it is however perfectly fimilar to what it is every-where elfe. When cuftom and fashion coincide with the natural principles of right and wrong, they heighten the delicacy of our fentiments, and increase our abhorrence for every thing which approaches to evil. Those who have been educated in what is really good company, not in what is commonly called fuch, who have been accustomed to see nothing in the persons whom they esteemed and lived with, but justice, modesty, humanity, and good order; are more shocked with whatever seems to be inconsistent with the rules which those virtues prescribe. Those, on the contrary, who have had the misfortune to be brought up amidst violence, licentiousness, falshood, and injustice; lose, though not all fense of the impropriety of such conduct, yet all fense of its dreadful enormity, or of the vengeance and punishment due to it. They have been familiarized with it from their infancy, custom has rendered it habitual to them. and they are very apt to regard it as, what is called, the way of the world, fomething which either may, or must be practised, to hinder us from being the dupes of our own integrity.

Fashion too will sometimes give reputation to a certain degree of disorder, and, on the contrary, discountenance qualities which deserve esteem. In the reign of Charles II. a degree of licentiousness was deemed the characteristic of a liberal education. It was connected, according to the notions of those times, with generosity, fincerity,

magnanimity, loyalty, and proved that the person who acted in this manner, was a gentleman, and not a puritan. Severity of manners, and regularity of conduct, on the other hand, were altogether unfashionable, and were connected, in the imagination of that age, with cant, cunning, hypocrify, and low manners. To fuperficial minds, the vices of the great feem at all times agreeable. They connect them, not only with the splendor of fortune, but with many fuperior virtues, which they ascribe to their superiors; with the spirit of freedom and independency, with frankness, generosity, humanity, and politeness. The virtues of the inferior ranks of people, on the contrary, their parfimonious frugality, their painful industry, and rigid adherence to rules, feem to them mean and difagreeable. They connect them, both with the meanness of the flation to which those qualities commonly belong; and with many great vices, which, they suppose, usually accompany them; such as an abject, cowardly, ill-natured, lying, pilfering disposition.

The objects with which men in the different professions and states of life are conversant, being very different, and habituating them to very different passions, naturally form in them very different characters and manners. We expect in each rank and profession, a degree of those manners, which, experience has taught us, belong to it. But as in each species of things, we are particularly pleased with the middle conformation, which, in every part and seature, agrees

most exactly with the general standard which nature seems to have established for things of that kind; fo in each rank, or, if I may fay fo, in each species of men, we are particularly pleased, if they have neither too much, nor too little of the character which usually accompanies their particular condition and fituation. A man, we fay, should look like his trade and profession; yet the pedantry of every profession is disagreeable. The different periods of life have, for the same reason, different manners affigned to them. We expect in old age, that gravity and fedateness which its infirmities, its long experience, and its worn-out fenfibility feem to render both natural and respectable; and we lay our account to find in youth that fenfibility, that gaiety and fprightly vivacity which experience teaches us to expect from the lively impressions that all interesting objects are apt to make upon the tender and unpractifed fenses of that early period of life. Each of those two ages, however, may eafily have too much of these peculiarities which belong to it. The flirting levity of youth, and the immoveable infensibility of old age, are equally difagreeable. The young, according to the common faying, are most agreeable when in their behaviour there is fomething of the manners of the old, and the old, when they retain something of the gaiety of the young. Either of them, however, may easily have too much of the manners of the other. The extreme coldness, and dull formality, which are pardoned

pardoned in old age, make youth ridiculous. The levity, the carelessness, and the vanity, which are indulged in youth, render old age contemptible.

The peculiar character and manners which we are led by custom to appropriate to each rank and profession, have sometimes perhaps a propriety independent of custom; and are what we fhould approve of for their own fakes, if we took into confideration all the different circumflances which naturally affect those in each different flate of life. The propriety of a person's behaviour, depends not upon its fuitableness to any one circumstance of his fituation, but to all the circumstances, which, when we bring his case home to ourselves, we feel, should naturally call upon his attention. If he appears to be so much occupied by any one of them, as entirely to neglect the rest, we disapprove of his conduct, as fomething which we cannot entirely go along with, because not properly adjusted to all the circumstances of his situation: Yet perhaps, the emotion he expresses for the object which principally interests him, does not exceed what we should entirely sympathize with, and approve of, in one whose attention was not required by any other thing. A parent in private life might, upon the loss of an only son, express without blame a degree of grief and tenderness, which would be unpardonable in a general at the head of an army, when glory, and the public fafety, demanded so great a part of his attention. As Vol. II.

different objects ought, upon common occasions, to occupy the attention of men of different professions, so different passions ought naturally to become habitual to them; and when we bring home to ourselves their situation in this particular respect, we must be sensible, that every occurrence should naturally affect them more or less, according as the emotion which it excites, coincides or difagrees with the fixt habit and temper of their minds. We cannot expect the fame centibility to the gay pleasures and amusements of life in a clergyman, which we lay our account with in an officer. The man whose peculiar occupation it is to keep the world in mind of that awful futurity which awaits them, who is to announce what may be the fatal confequences of every deviation from the rules of duty, and who is himself to set the example of the most exact conformity, feems to be the messenger of tidings, which cannot, in propriety, be delivered either with levity or indifference. His mind is fupposed to be continually occupied with what is too grand and folemn, to leave any room for the impressions of those frivolcus objects, which fill up the attention of the diffipated and the gay. We readily feel therefore, that, independent of custom, there is a propriety in the manners which custom has allotted to this profession; and that nothing can be more fuitable to the charafter of a clergyman, than that grave, that austere and abstracted severity, which we are habituated to expect in his behaviour. Thefe

reflections are fo very obvious, that there is fcarce any man fo inconfiderate, as not, at fome time, to have made them, and to have accounted to himself in this manner for his approbation of the usual character of this order.

The foundation of the customary character of fome other professions is not so obvious, and our approbation of it is founded entirely in habit. without being either confirmed, or enlivened by any reflections of this kind. We are led by cuftom, for example, to annex the character of gaiety, levity, and sprightly freedom, as well as of some degree of diffipation, to the military profession. Yet, if we were to consider what mood or tone of temper would be most suitable to this fituation, we should be apt to determine. perhaps, that the most serious and thoughtful turn of mind would best become those whose lives are continually exposed to uncommon danger. and who should therefore be more constantly occupied with the thoughts of death and its confequences than other men. It is this very circumstance, however, which is not improbably the occasion why the contrary turn of mind prevails fo much among men of this profession. It requires fo great an effort to conquer the. fear of death. when we furvey it with steadiness and attention. that those who are constantly exposed to it, find it easier to turn away their thoughts from it altogether, to wrap themselves up in careless security and indifference, and to plunge themselves, for this purpose, into every fort of amusement and dissipation. A camp

is not the element of a thoughtful or a melancholy man: persons of that cast, indeed, are often abundantly determined, and are capable, by a great effort, of going on with inflexible refolution to the most unavoidable death. But to be exposed to continual, though less imminent danger, to be obliged to exert, for a long time, a degree of this effort, exhausts and depresses the mind, and renders it incapable of all happiness and enjoyment. The gay and carelefs, who have occasion to make no effort at all, who fairly resolve never to look before them, but to lose in continual pleasures and amusements all anxiety about their fituation, more eafily support such circumstances. Whenever, by any peculiar circumstances, an officer has no reason to lay his account with being exposed to any uncommon danger, he is very apt to lofe the gaiety and diffipated thoughtlessness of his character. The captain of a city-guard is commonly as fober, careful, and penurious an animal as the rest of his fellow-citizens. A long peace is, for the fame reason, very apt to diminish the difference between the civil and the military character The ordinary fituation, however, of men of this profession, renders gaiety, and a degree of diffipation, fo much their usual character; and custom has, in our imagination, so strongly connected this character with this state of life, that we are very apt to despife any man, whose peculiar humor or situation, renders him incapable of acquiring it. We laugh at the grave and careful faces of a city-

guard, which so little resemble those of their profession. They themselves seem often to be ashamed of the regularity of their own manners, and, not to be out of the fashion of their trade, are fond of affecting that levity, which is by no means' natural to them. Whatever is the deportment which we have been accustomed to see in a refpectable order of men, it comes to be so associated in our imagination with that order, that whenever we fee the one, we lay our account that we are to meet with the other, and when disappointed, miss something which we expected to find. We are embarrassed, and put to a stand, and know not how to address ourselves to a character which plainly affects to be of a different species from those with which we should have been disposed to class it.

The different fituations of different ages and countries are apt, in the same manner, to give different characters to the generality of those who live in them, and their sentiments concerning the particular degree of each quality, that is either blamable or praise-worthy, vary, according to that degree which is usual in their own country, and in their own times. That degree of politeness, which would be highly esteemed, perhaps, would be thought esseminate adulation, in Russia, would be regarded as rudeness and barbarism at the court of France. That degree of order and frugality, which, in a Polish nobleman, would be considered as excessive parsimony; would be regarded as extravagance in a citizen of Amsterdam.

Every age and country look upon that degree of each quality, which is commonly to be met with in those who are esteemed among themselves, as the golden mean of that particular talent or virtue. And as this varies, according as their different circumstances render different qualities more or less habitual to them, their sentiments concerning the exact propriety of character and behaviour vary

accordingly.

Among civilized nations, the virtues which are founded upon humanity, are more cultivated than those which are founded upon self-denial and the command of the passions. Among rude and barbarous nations, it is quite otherwise, the virtues of felf-denial are more cultivated than those of humanity. The general fecurity and happiness which prevail in ages of civility and politeness, afford little exercise to the contempt of danger, to patience in enduring labor, hunger, and pain. Poverty may eafily be avoided, and the contempt of it therefore almost ceases to be a virtue. The abstinence from pleasure becomes less necessary, and the mind is more at liberty to unbend itself, and to indulge its natural inclinations in all those particular respects.

Among favages and barbarians it is quite otherwife. Every favage undergoes a fort of Spartan discipline, and by the necessity of his situation is inured to every fort of hardship. He is in continual danger: he is often exposed to the greatest extremities of hunger, and frequently dies of pure want. His circumstances not only habitnate

him to every fort of diffress, but teach him to give way to none of the passions which that distress is apt to excite. He can expect from his countrymen no lympathy or indulgence for fuch weakness. Before we can feel much for others, we must in some measure be at ease ourselves. If our own mifery pinches us very feverely, we have no leifure to attend to that of our neighbour: and all favages are too much occupied with their own wants and necessities; to give much attention to those of another person. A savage, therefore, whatever be the nature of his diffress, expects no fympathy from those about him. and disdains, upon that account, to expose himfelf, by allowing the leaft weakness to escape him. His passions, how furious and violent soever, are never permitted to diffurb the ferenity of his countenance or the composure of his conduct and behaviour. The favages in North America, we are told, assume upon all occasions the greatest indifference, and would think themselves degraded if they should ever appear in any respect to be overcome, either by love, or grief, or refentment. Their magnanimity and felf-command, in this respect, are almost beyond the conception of Europeans. In a country in which all men are upon a level, with regard to rank and fortune, it might be expected that the mutual inclinations of the two parties should be the only thing considered in marriages, and should be indulged without any fort of control. This, however, is the country

in which all marriages, without exception, are made up by the parents, and in which a young man would think himself disgraced for ever, if he showed the least preference of one woman above another, or did not express the most complete indifference, both about the time when, and the person to whom, he was to be married. The weakness of love, which is so much indulged in ages of humanity and politeness, is regarded among favages as the most unpardonable Even after the marriage, the two effeminacy. parties feem to be ashamed of a connexion which is founded upon fo fordid a necessity. They do not live together. They see one another by stealth only. They both continue to dwell in the houses of their respective fathers, and the open cohabitation of the two fexes, which is permitted without blame in all other countries, is here confidered as the most indecent and unmanly fensuality. Nor. is it only over this agreeable passion that they exert this absolute self-command. They often bear, in the fight of all their countrymen, with injuries, reproach, and the groffest infults, with the appearance of the greatest insensibility, and without expressing the smallest resentment. When a favage is made prisoner of war, and receives, as is usual, the sentence of death from his conquerors, he hears it without expressing any emotion. and afterwards fubmits to the most dreadful torments, without ever bemoaning himself, or discovering any other passion but contempt of his enemies. While he is hung by the shoulders over

a flow fire, he derides his tormentors, and tells them with how much more ingenuity he himself had tormented fuch of their countrymen as had fallen into his hands. After he has been fcorched and burnt, and lacerated in all the most tender and fensible parts of his body for several hours together, he is often allowed, in order to prolong his mifery, a short respite, and is taken down from the stake: he employs this interval in talking upon all indifferent subjects, inquires after the news of the country, and feems indifferent about nothing but his own fituation. The spectators express the same insensibility; the fight of so horrible an object feems to make no impression upon them; they scarce look at the prisoner, except when they lend a hand to torment him. At other times they smoke tobacco, and amuse themfelves with any common object, as if no fuch matter was going on. Every favage is faid to prepare himself from his earliest youth for this dreadful and. He composes, for this purpose, what they call the fong of death, a fong which he is to fing when he has fallen into the hands of his enemies, and is expiring under the tortures which they inflict upon him. It confifts of infults upon his tormentors, and expresses the highest contempt of death and pain. He fings this fong upon all extraordinary occasions, when he goes out to war, when he meets his enemies in the field, or whenever he has a mind to show that he has familiarized his imagination to the most dreadful misfortunes, and that no

human event can daunt his resolution, or alter his purpose. The same contempt of death end torture prevails among all other savage nations. There is not a negro from the coast of Africa who does not, in this respect possess a degree of magnanimity which the soul of his fordid master is too often scarce capable of conceiving. Fortune never exerted more cruelly her empire over mankind, than when she subjected those nations of heroes to the resuse of the jails of Europe, to wretches who possess the virtues neither of the countries which they come from, nor of those which they go to, and whose levity, brutality, and baseness, so justly expose them to the contempt of the vanquished.

This heroic and unconquerable firmness, which the custom and education of his country demand of every favage, is not required of those who are brought up to live in civilized focieties. If thefe last complain when they are in pain, if they grieve when they are in diffress, if they allow themselves either to be overcome by love, or to be discomposed by anger, they are easily pardoned. Such weaknesses are not apprehended to affect the essential parts of their character. As long as they do not allow themselves to be transported to do any thing contrary to justice or humanity, they lose but little reputation, though the ferenity of their countenance, or the composure of their discourse and behaviour, should be somewhat ruffled and disturbed. A humane and polished people, who have more fenfibility to the passions of others, can more readily enter into an animated and

paffionate behaviour, and can more eafily pardon fome little excess. The person principally concerned is fensible of this; and being assured of the equity of his judges, indulges himself in stronger expresfions of passion; and is less afraid of exposing himfelf to their contempt by the violence of his emotions. We can venture to express more emotion in the presence of a friend than in that of a stranger, because we expect more indulgence from the one than from the other. And in the same manner the rules of decorum among civilized nations, admit of a more animated behaviour, than is approved of among barbarians. The first converse together with the openness of friends; the second with the referve of strangers. The emotion and vivacity with which the French and the Italians, the two most polished nations upon the continent, express themselves on occasions that are at all interesting, furprise at first those strangers who happen to be travelling among them, and who, having been educated among a people of duller fenfibility, cannot enter into this passionate behaviour, of which they have never feen any example in their own country. A young French nobleman will weep in the presence of the whole court upon being refused a regiment. An Italian, says the abbot Du Bos, expresses more emotion on being condemned in a fine of twenty shillings, than an Englishman on receiving the fentence of death. in the times of the highest Roman politeness, could, without degrading himself, weep with all

the bitterness of forrow in the fight of the whole fenate and the whole people; as it is evident he must have done in the end of almost every oration. The orators of the earlier and ruder ages of Rome could not probably, confiftent with the manners of the times, have expressed themselves with fo much emotion. It would have been regarded, I suppose, as a violation of nature and pro riety in the Scipios, in the Leliuses, and in the elder Cato, to have exposed so much tenderness to the view of the public. Those ancient warriors could express themselves with order, gravity, and good judgment; but are faid to have been strangers to that sublime and passionate eloquence which was first introduced into Rome, not many years before the birth of Cicero, by the two Gracchi, by Craffus, and by Sulpitius. This animated eloquence, which has been long practifed, with or without fuccess, both in France and Italy, is but just beginning to be introduced into England. So wide is the difference between the degrees of felf-command which are required in civilized and in barbarous nations, and by fuch different standards do they judge of the propriety of behaviour.

This difference gives occasion to many others that are not less essential. A polished people being accustomed to give way, in some measure, to the movements of nature, become frank, open, and sincere. Barbarians, on the contrary, being obliged to smother and conceal the appearance of every passion, necessarily acquire the habits of falshood and

diffimulation. It is observed by all those who have been conversant with savage nations, whether in Afia, Africa, or America, that they are all equally impenetrable, and that, when they have a mind to conceal the truth, no examination is capable of drawing it from them. They cannot be trepanned by the most artful questions. The torture itself is incapable of making them confess any thing which they have no mind to tell. The passions of a savage too, though they never express themselves by any outward emotion, but lie concealed in the breaft of the fufferer, are, notwithstanding, all mounted to the highest pitch of sury. Though he seldom shows any fymptoms of anger, yet his vengeance, when he comes to give way to it, is always fanguinary and dreadful. The least affront drives him to despair. His countenance and discourse indeed are still fober and composed, and express nothing but the most perfect tranquillity of mind: but his actions are often the most furious and violent. Among the North-Americans it is not uncommon for persons of the tenderest age and more fearful fex to drown themselves upon receiving only a flight reprimand from their mothers, and this too without expressing any passion, or faying any thing, except, you shall no longer have daughter. In civilized nations the passions of men are not commonly so furious or so desperate. They are often clamorous and noify, but are feldom very hurtful; and feem frequently to aim

at no other satisfaction, but that of convincing the spectator, that they are in the right to be so much moved, and of procuring his sympathy and

approbation.

All these effects of custom and fashion, however, upon the moral sentiments of mankind, are inconsiderable, in comparison of those which they give occasion to in some other cases: and it is not concerning the general style of characterand behaviour, that those principles produce the greatest perversion of judgment, but concerning the propriety or impropriety of particular usages.

The different manners which custom teaches us to approve of in the different professions and states of life, do not concern things of the greatest importance. We expect truth and justice from an old man as well as from a young, from a clergyman as well as from an officer; and it is in matters of small moment only that we look for the diffinguishing marks of their respective characters. With regard to these too, there is often some unobserved circumstance which, if it was attended to, would show us, that, independent of custom, there was a propriety in the character which custom had taught us to allot to each profession. We cannot complain, therefore, in this case, that the perversion of natural fentiment is very great. Though the manners of different nations require different degrees of the same quality, in the character which they think worthy of esteem, yet the worst that can be said to happen even here, is that

the duties of one virtue are fometimes extended fo as to encroach a little upon the precincts of some other. The rustic hospitality that is in fashion among the Poles encroaches, perhaps, a little upon econony and good order; and the frugality that is esteemed in Holland, upon generosity and good-fellowship. The hardiness demanded of savages diminishes their humanity; and, perhaps. the delicate fenfibility required in civilized nations fometimes destroys the masculine firmness of the character. In general, the flyle of manners which takes place in any nation, may commonly upon the whole be faid to be that which is most fuitable to its fituation. Hardiness is the character most fuitable to the circumstances of a savage: fenfibility to those of one who lives in a very civilized fociety. Even here, therefore, we cannot complain that the moral fentiments of men are very grossly perverted.

It is not therefore in the general style of conduct or behaviour that custom authorizes the widest departure from what is the natural propriety of action. With regard to particular susages, its influence is often much more destructive of good morals, and it is capable of establishing, as lawful and blameless, particular actions, which shock the plainest principles of right and wrong

Can there be greater barbarity, for example, than to hurt an infant? Its helplessness, its innocence, its amiableness, call forth the compassion, even of an enemy, and not to spare that tender age is regarded as the most furious effort of an

enraged and cruel conqueror. What then should we imagine must be the heart of a parent who could injure that weakness which even a furious enemy is afraid to violate? Yet the exposition, that is, the murder of new-born infants, was a practice allowed of in almost all the states of Greece, even among the polite and civilized Athenians; and whenever the circumstances of the parent rendered it inconvenient to bring up the child, to abandon it to hunger, or to wild breafts, was regarded without blame or censure. This practice had probably begun in times of the most favage barbarity. The imaginations of men had been first made familiar with it in that earliest period of fociety, and the uniform continuance of the custom had hindered them afterwards from perceiving its enormity. We find, at this day, that this practice prevails among all favage nations; and in that rudest and lowest state of society it is undoubtedly more pardonable than in any other. The extreme indigence of a favage is often fuch that he himself is frequently exposed to the greatest extremity of hunger, he often dies of pure want, and it is frequently impossible for him to support both himself and his child. We cannot wonder, therefore, that in this case he should abandon it. One who, in flying from an enemy whom it was impossible to refift, should throw down his infant, because it retarded his flight, would furely be excufable; fince; by attempting to fave it, he could only hope

for the consolation of dying with it. That in this state of society, therefore, a parent should be allowed to judge whether he can bring up his child, ought not to furprise us so greatly. In the latter ages of Greece, however, the same thing was permitted from views of remote interest or conveniency, which could by no means excuse it. Uninterrupted custom had by this time fo thoroughly authorized the practice, that not only the loose maxims of the world tolerated this barbarous prerogative, but even the doctrine of philosophers, which ought to have been more just and accurate, was led away by the established custom, and upon this, as upon many other occasions, instead of censuring, supported the horrible abuse, by far-fetched considerations of public utility. Aristotle talks of it as of what the magistrate ought upon many occasions to encourage. The humane Plato is of the same opinion, and, with all that love of mankind which feems to animate all his writings, no where marks this practice with disapprobation. When custom can give fanction to fo dreadful a violation of humanity, we may well imagine that there is fcarce any particular practice fo gross which it cannot authorize. Such a thing, we hear 'men every day faying, is commonly done, and they feem to think this a fufficient apology for what, in itself. is the most unjust and unreasonable conduct.

There is an obvious reason why custom should never pervert our sentiments with regard to the Vol. II.

34 OF THE INFLUENCE, &c. Part V.

general style and character of conduct and behaviour, in the same degree as with regard to the propriety or unlawfulness of particular usages. There never can be any such custom. No society could subsist a moment, in which the usual strain of men's conduct and behaviour was of a piece with the horrible practice I have just now mentioned.

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MORAL SENTIMENTS.

PART VI.

Of the CHARACTER of VIRTUE,

Confisting of Three Sections.

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN we consider the character of any individual, we naturally view it under two different aspects; first, as it may affect his own happiness; and secondly, as it may affect that of other people.

SECT. I.

Of the Character of the Individual, so far as it affects his own Happiness; or of Prudence.

THE preservation and healthful state of the body seem to be the objects which Nature sirst recommends to the care of every individual. The appetites of hunger and thirst, the agreeable or disagreeable sensations of pleasure and pain, of heat and cold, &c. may be considered as lessons delivered by the voice of Nature herself, directing him what he ought to chuse, and what he ought to avoid, for this purpose. The first lessons which he is taught by those to whom his childhood is intrusted, tend, the greater part of them, to the same purpose. Their principal object is to teach him how to keep out of harm's way.

As he grows up, he foon, learns that fome care and forefight are necessary for providing the means of gratifying those natural appetites, of procuring pleasure and avoiding pain, of procuring the agreeable and avoiding the disagreeable temperature of heat and cold. In the proper direction of this care and forefight consists the art of preserving and increasing what is called his external fortune.

Though it is in order to supply the necessities and conveniences of the body, that the advantages of external fortune are originally recommended to us, yet we cannot live long in the world without

perceiving that the respect of our equals, our credit and rank in the society we live in, depend very much upon the degree in which we posses, or are supposed to posses, those advantages. The desire of becoming the proper objects of this respect, of deserving and obtaining this credit and rank among our equals, is, perhaps, the strongest of all our desires, and our anxiety to obtain the advantages of fortune is accordingly much more excited and irritated by this desire, than by that of supplying all the necessities and conveniences of the body, which are always very easily supplied.

Our rank and credit among our equals, too, depend very much upon, what, perhaps, a virtuous man would wish them to depend entirely, our character and conduct, or upon the confidence, esteem, and good-will, which these naturally excite

in the people we live with.

The care of the health, of the fortune, of the rank and reputation of the individual, the objects upon which his comfort and happiness in this life are supposed principally to depend, is considered as the proper business of that virtue which is commonly called Prudence.

We fuffer more, it has already been observed, when we fall from a better to a worse situation, than we ever enjoy when we rise from a worse to a better. Security, therefore, is the first and the principal object of prudence. It is averse to expose our health, our fortune, our rank, or reputation, to any sort of hazard. It is rather cautious than

enterprising, and more anxious to preserve the advantages which we already possess, than forward to prompt us to the acquisition of still greater advantages. The methods of improving our fortune, which it principally recommends to us, are those which expose to no loss or hazard; real knowledge and skill in our trade or profession, assiduity and industry in the exercise of it, frugality, and even some degree of parsimony, in all our

expenses.

The prudent man always studies seriously and earnestly to understand whatever he professes to understand, and not merely to persuade other people that he understands it; and though his talents may not always be very brilliant, they are always perfectly genuine. He neither endeavours to impose upon you by the cunning devices of an artful impostor, nor by the arrogant airs of an affuming pedant, nor by the confident affertions of a superficial and impudent pretender. He is not oftentatious even of the abilities which he really possesses. His conversation is simple and modest, and he is averse to all the quackish arts by which other people so frequently thrust themselves into public notice and reputation. For reputation in his profession he is naturally disposed to rely a good deal upon the folidity of his knowledge and abilities; and he does not always think of cultivating the favor of those little clubs and cabals. who, in the fuperior arts and sciences, so often erect themselves into the supreme judges of merit; and who make it their business to celebrate the

talents and virtues of one another, and to decry whatever can come into competition with them. If he ever connects himself with any society of this kind it is merely in felf-defence, not with a view to impose upon the public, but to hinder the public from being imposed upon, to his difadvantage, by the clamors, the whifpers, or the intrigues, either of that particular fociety. or of some other of the same kind.

The prudent man is always fincere, and feels horror at the very thought of exposing himself to the difgrace which attends upon the detection of falshood. But though always fincere, he is not always frank and open; and though he never tells any thing but the truth, he does not always think himself bound, when not properly called upon, to tell the whole truth. As he is cautious in his actions, so he is referved in his speech; and never rashly or unnecessarily obtrudes his opinion concerning either things or perfons.

The prudent man, though not always distinguished by the most exquisite sensibility, is always very capable of friendship. But his friendship is not that ardent and passionate, but too often transitory affection, which appears so delicious to the generofity of youth and inexperience. It is a sedate, but steady and faithful attachment to a few well-tried and well-chosen companions; in the choice of whom he is not guided by the giddy admiration of thining accomplishments, but by the fober esteem of modesty, discretion, and good conduct. But though capable of friendship,

he is not always much disposed to general sociality. He rarely frequents, and more rarely figures in those convivial societies which are distinguished for the jollity and gaiety of their conversation. Their way of life might too often interfere with the regularity of his temperance, might interrupt the steadiness of his industry, or break

in upon the strictness of his frugality.

But though his conversation may not always be very fprightly or diverting, it is always perfectly inoffensive. He hates the thought of being guilty of any petulance or rudeness. He never assumes impertinently over any body, and, upon all common occasions, is willing to place himself rather below than above his equals. Both in his conduct and conversation, he is an exact observer of decency, and respects with an almost religious scrupulofity, all the established decorums and ceremonials of fociety. And, in this respect, he fets a much better example than has frequently been done by men of much more splendid talents and virtues; who, in all ages, from that of Socrates and Aristippus, down to that of Dr. Swift and Voltaire, and from that of Philip and Alexander the Great, down to that of the great Czar Peter of Moscovy, have too often distinguished themselves by the most improper and even infolent contempt of all the ordinary decorums of life and conversation, and who have thereby fet the most pernicious example to those who wish to resemble them, and who too often content themselves with imitating their follies.

without even attempting to attain their perfections.

In the steadiness of his industry and frugality, in his fleadily facrificing the eafe and enjoyment of the present moment for the probable expectation of the still greater ease and enjoyment of a more distant but more lasting period of time, the prudent man is always both supported and rewarded by the entire approbation of the impartial spectator. and of the representative of the impartial spectator, the man within the breast. The impartial spectator does not feel himself worn out by the present labor of those whose conduct he surveys; nor does he feel himself solicited by the importunate calls of their present appetites. To him their present, and what is likely to be their future fituation, are very nearly the fame; he fees them nearly at the fame distance, and is affected by them very nearly in the fame manner. He knows, however, that to the persons principally concerned, they are very far from being the fame, and that they naturally affect them in a very different manner. He cannot therefore but approve, and even applaud, that proper exertion of felf-command, which enables them to act as if their present and their future fituation affected them nearly in the fame manner in which they affect him.

The man who lives within his income, is naturally contented with his fituation, which, by continual, though small accumulations, is growing better and better every day. He is enabled gradually to relax, both in the rigor of his parsimony and in

the feverity of his application; and he feels with double satisfaction this gradual increase of ease and enjoyment, from having felt before the hardship which attended the want of them. He has no anxiety to change so comfortable a situation, and does not go in quest of new enterprises and adventures, which might endanger, but could not well increase, the secure tranquility which he actually enjoys. If he enters into any new projects or enterprises, they are likely to be well concerted and well prepared. He can never be hurried or drove into them by any necessity, but has always time and leisure to deliberate soberly and coolly concerning what are

likely to be their confequences.

The prudent man is not willing to subject himself to any responsibility which his duty does not impose upon him. He is not a buftler in bufiness where he has no concern; is not a meddler in other people's affairs; is not a professed counsellor or adviser, who obtrudes his advice where nobody is asking it. He confines himself, as much as his duty will permit, to his own affairs, and has no tafte for that foolish importance which many people wish to derive from appearing to have some influence in the management of those of other people. He is averse to enter into any party-disputes, hates faction, and is not always very forward to listen to the voice even of noble and great ambition. When distinctly called upon, he will not decline the service of his country, but he will not cabal in order to force himself into it, and would be much better pleased that the public business were well

managed by fome other person, than that he himself should have the trouble, and incur the responsibility, of managing it. In the bottom of his heart he would prefer the undisturbed enjoyment of secure tranquillity, not only to all the vain splendor of successful ambition, but to the real and solid glory of performing the greatest and most magnanimous actions.

Prudence, in short, when directed merely to the care of the health, of the fortune, and of the rank and reputation of the individual, though it is regarded as a most respectable, and even, in some degree, as an amiable and agreeable quality, yet it never is considered as one, either of the most endearing, or of the most ennobling of the virtues. It commands a certain cold esteem, but seems not entitled to any very ardent love or admiration.

Wise and judicious conduct, when directed to greater and nobler purposes than the care of the health, the fortune, the rank and reputation of the individual, is frequently and very properly called prudence. We talk of the prudence of the great general, of the great statesman, of the great legislator. Prudence is, in all these cases, combined with many greater and more splendid virtues, with valor, with extensive and strong benevolence, with a sacred regard to the rules of justice, and all these supported by a proper degree of self-command. This superior prudence, when carried to the highest degree of perfection, necessarily supposes the art, the talent, and the habit or disposition of acting with the most perfect

propriety in every possible circumstance and situation. It necessarily supposes the utmost perfection of all the intellectual and of all the moral virtues. It is the best head joined to the best heart. It is the most perfect wisdom combined with the most perfect virtue. It constitutes very nearly the character of the Academical or Peripatetic sage, as the inferior prudence does that of the Epicurean.

Mere imprudence, or the mere want of the capacity to take care of one's-self, is, with the generous and humane, the object of compassion; with those of less delicate sentiments, of neglect, or, at worst, of contempt, but never of hatred or indignation-When combined with other vices, however, it aggravates in the highest degree the infamy and difgrace which would otherwise attend them. The artful knave, whose dexterity and address exempt him, though not from strong suspicions, yet from punishment or distinct detection, is too often received in the world with an indulgence which he by no means deserves. The awkward and foolish one, who, for want of this dexterity and address, is convicted and brought to punishment, is the object of univerfal hatred, contempt, and derision. In countries where great crimes frequently pass unpunished, the most atrocious actions. become almost familiar, and cease to impress the people with that horror which is univerfally felt in countries where an exact administration of justice takes place. The injustice is the same in both countries; but the imprudence is often very different.

In the latter, great crimes are evidently great follies. In the former, they are not always confidered as fuch. In Italy, during the greater part of the fixteenth century, affaffinations, murders, and even murders under truft, feem to have been almost familiar among the superior ranks of people. Cæsar Borgia invited four of the little princes in his neighbourhood, who all possessed little fovereignties, and commanded little armies of their own, to a friendly conference at Senigaglia, where, as foon as they arrived, he put them all to death. This infamous action, though certainly not approved of even in that age of crimes, feems to have contributed very little to the difcredit, and not in the least to the ruin of the perpetrator. That ruin happened a few years after from causes altogether disconnected with this crime. Machiavel, not indeed a man of the nicest morality even for his own times, was refident. as minister from the republic of Florence, at the court of Cæfar Borgia when this crime was committed. He gives a very particular account of it, and in that pure, elegant, and fimple language which diffinguishes all his writings. He talks of it very coolly; is pleafed with the address with which Cæfar Borgia conducted it; has much contempt for the dupery and weakness of the sufferers: but no compassion for their miserable and untimely death, and no fort of indignation at the cruelty and falshood of their murderer. The violence and injuffice of great conquerors are often regarded with foolish wonder and

admiration; those of petty thieves, robbers, and murderers, with contempt, hatred, and even horror upon all occasions. The former, though they are a hundred times more mischievous and destructive, yet when successful, they often pass for deeds of the most heroic magnanimity. The latter are always viewed with hatred and aversion, as the follies, as well as the crimes, of the lowest and most worthless of mankind. The injuffice of the former is certainly, at leaft, as great as that of the latter; but the folly and imprudence are not near fo great. A wicked and worthless man of parts often goes through the world with much more credit than he deferves. A wicked and worthless fool appears always, of all mortals, the most hateful, as well as the most contemptible. As prudence combined with other virtues, constitutes the noblest; so imprudence combined with other vices, constitutes the vilest of all characters.

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SECTION. IL

Of the Character of the Individual, fo far as it can affect the Happiness of other People.

INTRODUCTION.

THE character of every individual, so far as it can affect the happiness of other people, must do so by its disposition either to hurt or to benefit them.

Proper resentment for injustice attempted, or actually committed, is the only motive which, in the eyes of the impartial spectator, can justify our hurting or disturbing in any respect the happiness of our neighbour. To do fo from any other motive is itself a violation of the laws of justice, which force ought to be employed either to restrain or to punish. The wisdom of every flate or commonwealth endeavours, as well as it can, to employ the force of the fociety to restrain those who are subject to its authority, from hurting or disturbing the happiness of one another. The rules which it establishes for this purpose, constitute the civil and criminal law of each particular state or country. The principles upon which those rules either are, or ought to be founded, are the subject of a particular science, of all sciences by far the most important, but hitherto, perhaps, the least cultivated, that of natural jurisprudence;

concerning which it belongs not to our prefent fubject to enter into any detail. A facred and religious regard not to hurt or disturb in any refpect the happiness of our neighbour, even in those cases where no law can properly protect him, constitutes the character of the perfectly innocent and just man; a character which, when carried to a certain delicacy of attention, is always highly respectable and even venerable for its own sake. and can scarce ever fail to be accompanied with many other virtues, with great feeling for other people, with great humanity and great benevolence. It is a character fufficiently understood, and requires no further explanation. In the prefent fection I shall only endeavour to explain the foundation of that order which nature feems to have traced out for the distribution of our good offices, or for the direction and employment of our very limited powers of beneficence: first, towards individuals; and fecondly, towards focieties.

The same unerring wisdom, it will be found, which regulates every other part of her conduct, directs, in this respect too, the order of her recommendations; which are always stonger or weaker in proportion as our beneficence is more or less necessary, or can be more or less useful.

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CHAP, I.

Of the Order in which Individuals are recommended by nature to our care and attention.

EVERY man, as the Stoics used to say, is first and principally recommended to his own care; and every man is certainly, in every respect, fitter and abler to take care of himself than of any other person. Every man feels his own pleasures and his own pains more fenfibly than those of other people. The former are the original fenfations; the latter the reflected or sympathetic images of those sensations. The former may be faid to be the substance; the latter the shadow.

After himself, the members of his own family, those who usually live in the same house with him, his parents, his children, his brothers and fifters, are naturally the objects of his warmest affections. They are naturally and usually the persons upon whose happiness or misery his conduct must have the greatest influence. He is more habituated to fympathize with them. He knows better how every thing is likely to affect them, and his sympathy with them is more precise and determinate, than it can be with the greater part of other people. It approaches nearer, in short, to what he feels for himfelf.

This sympathy too, and the affections which are founded on it, are by nature more strongly directed towards his children than towards his Vol. II.

parents, and his tenderness for the former seems generally a more active principle, than his reverence and gratitude towards the latter. In the natural state of things, it has already been observed, the existence of the child, for some time after it comes into the world, depends altogether upon the care of the parent; that of the parent does not naturally depend upon the care of the child. In the eye of nature, it would feem, a child is a more important object than an old man; and excites a much more lively, as well as a much more universal sympathy. It ought to do fo. Every thing may be expected, or at least hoped, from the child. In ordinary cases, very little can be either expected or hoped from the old man. The weakness of childhood interests the affections of the most brutal and hard-hearted. It is only to the virtuous and humane, that the infirmities of old age are not the objects of contempt and aversion. In ordinary cases, an old man dies without being much regretted by any body. Scarce a child can die without rending afunder the heart of fomebody.

The earliest friendships, the friendships which are naturally contracted when the heart is most susceptible of that seeling, are those among brothers and sisters. Their good agreement, while they remain in the same family, is necessary for its tranquillity and happiness. They are capable of giving more pleasure or pain to one another than to the greater part of other people. Their situation renders their mutual sympathy of the utmost importance to their common happiness; and, by

the wisdom of nature, the same situation; by obliging them to accommodate to one another, renders that fympathy more habitual, and thereby more lively, more distinct, and more determinate.

The children of brothers and fifters are naturally connected by the friendship which, after separating into different families, continues to take place between their parents. Their good agreement improves the enjoyment of that friendship ! their discord would disturb it. As they seldom live in the fame family, however, though of more importance to one another, than to the greater part of other people, they are of much less than brothers and fifters. As their mutual sympathy is less necessary, so it is less habitual, and therefore proportionably weaker.

The children of cousins, being still less connected, are of still less importance to one another; and the affection gradually diminishes as the rela-

tion grows more and more remote.

What is called affection, is in reality nothing but habitual fympathy. Our concern in the happiness or misery of those who are the objects of what we call our affections; our defire to promote the one, and to prevent the other; are either the actual feeling of that habitual fympathy, or the necessary consequences of that feeling. Relations being usually placed in situations which naturally create this habitual fympathy, it is expected that a fuitable degree of affection should take place among them. We generally find that it

actually does take place; we therefore naturally expect that it should; and we are, upon that account, more shocked when, upon any occasion, we find that it does not. The general rule is established, that persons related to one another in a certain degree, ought always to be affected towards one another in a certain manner, and that there is always the highest impropriety, and sometimes even a sort of impiety, in their being affected in a different manner. A parent without parental tenderness, a child devoid of all filial reverence, appear monsters, the objects,

not of hatred only, but of horror.

Though in a particular instance, the circumstances which usually produce those natural affections, as they are called, may, by fome accident, not have taken place, yet respect for the general rule will frequently, in some measure, supply their place, and produce something which, though not altogether the fame, may bear, however, a very confiderable refemblance to those affections. father is apt to be less attached to a child, who, by some accident, has been separated from him in its infancy, and who does not return to him till it is grown up to manhood. The father is apt to feel less parental tenderness for the child; the child, less filial reverence for the father. Brothers and fifters, when they have been educated in diffant countries, are apt to feel a fimilar diminution of affection. With the dutiful and the virtuous, however, respect for the general rule will frequently produce fomething which, though by no means the fame, yet

may very much refemble those natural affections. Even during the separation, the father and the child. the brothers or the fifters, are by no means indifferent to one another. They all confider one another as persons to and from whom certain affections are due, and they live in the hopes of being fometime or another in a fituation to enjoy that friendship which ought naturally to have taken place among persons so nearly connected. Till they meet, the absent son, the absent brother, are frequently the favorite fon, the favorite brother. They have never offended, or, if they have, it is fo long ago, that the offence is forgotten, as fome childish trick not worth the remembering. Every account they have heard of one another, if conveyed by people of any tolerable good nature, has been, in the highest degree, flattering and favorable. The absent son, the abfent brother, is not like other ordinary fons and brothers; but an all-perfect fon, an all-perfect brother; and the most romantic hopes are entertained of the happiness to be enjoyed in the friendship and conversation of such persons. When they meet, it is often with fo firong a disposition to conceive that habitual fympathy which constitutes the family-affection, that they are very apt to fancy they have actually conceived it, and to behave to one another as if they had. Time and experience, however, I am afraid, too frequently undeceive them. Upon a more familiar acquaintance, they frequently discover in one another habits, humors, and inclinations, Si late ing stag vinomeroo E 3 Ponti L

different from what they expected, to which, from want of habitual fympathy, from want of the real principle and foundation of what is properly called family-affection, they cannot now eafily accommodate themselves. They have never lived in the fituation which almost necessarily forces that eafy accommodation, and though they may now be fincerely defirous to assume it, they have really become incapable of doing fo. Their familiar conversation and intercourse soon become less pleasing to them, and, upon that account, less frequent. They may continue to live with one another in the mutual exchange of all effential good offices, and with every other external appearance of decent regard. But that cordial fatiffaction, that delicious sympathy, that confidential openness and ease, which naturally take place in the conversation of those who have lived long and familiarly with one another, it seldom happens that they can completely enjoy.

It is only, however, with the dutiful and the virtuous, that the general rule has even this slender authority. With the dissipated, the profligate, and the vain, it is entirely disregarded. They are so far from respecting it, that they seldom talk of it but with the most indecent derision; and an early and long separation of this kind never sails to estrange them most completely from one another. With such persons, respect for the general rule can at best produce only a cold and affected civility (a very slender semblance of real regard); and even this, the slightest offence, the smallest opposition of interest, commonly puts an end to altogether.

The education of boys at diftant great schools. of young men at distant colleges, of young ladies in distant nunneries and boarding-schools, seems, in the higher ranks of life, to have hurt most effentially the domestic morals, and consequently the domestic happiness, both of France and England. Do you wish to educate your children to be dutiful to their parents, to be kind and affectionate to their brothers and fifters? put them under the necessity of being dutiful children, of being kind and affectionate brothers and fifters: educate them in your own house. From their parent's house they may, with propriety and advantage, go out every day to attend public schools; but let their dwelling be always at home. Respect for you must always impose a very useful restraint upon their conduct; and respect for them may frequently impose no useless restraint upon your own. Surely no acquirement, which can possibly be derived from what is called a public education, can make any fort of compensation for what is almost certainly and necessarily lost by it. Domestic education is the institution of nature; public education, the contrivance of man. It is furely unnecessary to fay, which is likely to be the wifest.

In some tragedies and romances, we meet with many beautiful and interesting scenes, founded upon, what is called, the force of blood, or upon the wonderful affection which near relations are supposed to conceive for one another, even before they know that they have any such connexion.

This force of blood, however, I am afraid, exists no-where but in tragedies and romances. Even in tragedies and romances, it is never supposed to take place between any relations, but those who are naturally bred up in the same house; between parents and children, between brothers and sisters. To imagine any such mysterious affection between cousins, or even between aunts or uncles, and nephews or nieces, would be too ridiculous.

In pastoral countries, and in all countries where the authority of law is not alone sufficient to give perfect fecurity to every member of the state, all the different branches of the fame family commonly chuse to live in the neighbourhood of one another. Their affociation is frequently necessary for their common defence. They are all, from the highest to the lowest, of more or less importance to one another. Their concord firengthens their necessary association; their discord always weakens, and might destroy it. They have more intercourse with one another, than with the members of any other tribe. The remotest members of the same tribe claim fome connexion with one another: and, where all other circumstances are equal, expect to be treated with more diffinguished attention than is due to those who have no such pretenfions. It is not many years ago that, in the Highlands of Scotland, the Chieftain used to confider the poorest man of his clan, as his cousin and relation. The same extensive regard to kindred is faid to take place among the Tartars, the Arabs, the Turkomans, and, I believe, among all other

nations who are nearly in the same state of society in which the Scots Highlanders were about the

beginning of the present century.

In commercial countries, where the authority of law is always perfectly fufficient to protect the meanest man in the state, the descendants of the fame family, having no fuch motive for keeping together, naturally separate and disperse, as interest or inclination may direct. They foon ceafe to be of importance to one another; and in a few generations, not only lose all care about one another. but all remembrance of their commom origin, and of the connexion which took place among their ancestors. Regard for remote relations becomes, in every country, less and less, according as this state of civilization has been longer and more completely established. It has been longer and more completely established in England than in Scotland; and remote relations are, accordingly, more confidered in the latter country than in the former, though, in this respect, the difference between the two countries is growing less and less every day. Great lords, indeed, are, in every country, proud of remembering and acknowledging their connexion with one another, however remote. The remembrance of fuch illustrious relations flatters not a little the family-pride of them all; and it is neither from affection, nor from any thing which refembles affection, but from the most frivolous and childish of all vanities, that this remembrance is fo carefully kept up. Should fome more humble, though, perhaps,

much nearer kinsman, presume to put such great men in mind of his relation to their family, they seldom fail to tell him that they are bad genealogists, and miserably ill-informed concerning their own family-history. It is not in that order, I am asraid, that we are to expect any extraordinary extension of, what is called, natural affection.

I confider what is called natural affection as more the effect of the moral than of the supposed physical connexion between the parent and the child. A jealous husband, indeed, notwithstanding the moral connexion, notwithstanding the child's having been educated in his own house, often regards, with hatred and aversion, that unhappy child which he supposes to be the offspring of his wife's infidelity. It is the lasting monument of a most disagreeable adventure; of his own dishonor, and of the disgrace of his family.

Among well-disposed people, the necessity or conveniency of mutual accommodation, very frequently produces a friendship not unlike that which takes place among those who are born to live in the same family. Colleagues in office, partners in trade, call one another brothers; and frequently feel towards one another as if they really were so. Their good agreement is an advantage to all; and, if they are tolerably reasonable people, they are naturally disposed to agree. We expect that they should do so; and their disagreement is a sort of a small scandal. The

Romans expressed this fort of attachment by the word necessitudo, which, from the etymology, seems to denote that it was imposed by the

necessity of the situation.

Even the trifling circumstances of living in the same neighbourhood, has some effect of the same kind. We respect the sace of a man whom we see every day, provided he has never offended us. Neighbours can be very convenient, and they can be very troublesome, to one another. If they are good fort of people, they are naturally disposed to agree. We expect their good agreement; and to be a bad neighbour is a very bad character. There are certain small good offices, accordingly, which are universally allowed to be due to a neighbour in preference to any other person who has no such connexion.

This natural disposition to accommodate and to assimilate, as much as we can, our own sentiments, principles, and feelings, to those which we see fixed and rooted in the persons whom we are obliged to live and converse a great deal with, is the cause of the contagious effects of both good and bad company. The man who associates chiefly with the wise and the virtuous, though he may not himself become either wise or virtuous, cannot help conceiving a certain respect at least for wisdom and virtue; and the man who associates chiefly with the profligate and the dissolute, though he may not himself become profligate and dissolute, must soon lose, at least, all his original abhorrence of profligacy and dissolution of manners. The

fimilarity of family-characters, which we so frequently see transmitted through several successive generations, may, perhaps be partly owing to this disposition, to assimilate ourselves to those whom we are obliged to live and converse a great deal with. The family-character, however, like the family-countenance, seems to be owing, not altogether to the moral, but partly too to the physical connexion. The family-countenance is

certainly altogether owing to the latter.

But of all attachments to an individual, that which is founded altogether upon effeem and approbation of his good conduct and behaviour, confirmed by much experience and long acquaintance, is, by far, the most respectable. Such friendships, arifing not from a constrained sympathy, not from a fympathy, which has been assumed and rendered habitual for the fake of convenience and accommodation; but from a natural sympathy, from an involuntary feeling that the persons to whom we attach ourselves are the natural and proper objects of efteem and approbation; can exist only among men of virtue. Men of virtue only can feel that entire confidence in the conduct and behaviour of one another, which can, at all times, affure them that they can never either offend or be offended by one another. Vice is always capricious: virtue only is regular and orderly. The attachment which is founded upon the love of virtue, as it is certainly, of all attachments, the most virtuous; so it is likewise the happiest, as well as the most permanent and secure.

Such friendships need not be confined to a single person, but may safely embrace all the wise and virtuous, with whom we have been long and intimately acquainted, and upon whose wisdom and virtue we can, upon that account, entirely depend. They who would confine friendship to two persons, seem to confound the wise security of friendship with the jealoufy and folly of love. The hafty, fond, and foolish intimacies of young people, founded, commonly, upon fome flight fimilarity of character, altogether unconnected with good conduct, upon a tafte, perhaps, for the fame studies, the same amusements, the same diversions, or upon their agreement in some fingular principle or opinion, not commonly adopted; those intimacies which a freak begins, and which a freak puts an end to, how agreeable foever they may appear while they last, can by no means deserve the facred and venerable name of friendship.

Of all the perfons, however, whom nature points out for our peculiar beneficence, there are none to whom it feems more properly directed than to those whose beneficence we have ourselves already experienced. Nature, which formed men for that natural kindness, so necessary for their happiness, renders every man the peculiar object of kindness, to the persons to whom he himself has been kind. Though their gratitude should not always correspond to his beneficence, yet the fense of his merit, the sympathetic gratitude of the impartial spectator, will always correspond

to it. The general indignation of other people, against the baseness of their ingratitude, will even sometimes, increase the general sense of his merit. No benevolent man ever lost altogether the fruits of his benevolence. If he does not always gather them from the persons from whom he ought to have gathered them, he seldom fails to gather them, and with a tensold increase, from other people. Kindness is the parent of kindness; and if to be beloved by our brethren be the great object of our ambition, the surest way of obtaining it is, by our conduct to show that we really love them.

After the persons who are recommended to our beneficence, either by their connexion with ourselves, by their personal qualities, or by their past services, come those who are pointed out, not indeed to, what is called, our friendship, but to our benevolent attention and good offices; those who are distinguished by their extraordinary fituation; the greatly fortunate and the greatly unfortunate, the rich and the powerful, the poor and the wretched. The distinction of ranks, the peace and order of fociety, are, in a great measure, founded upon the respect which we naturally conceive for the former. The relief and consolation of human misery depend altogether upon our compassion for the latter. The peace and order of fociety, is of more importance than even the relief of the miserable. Our respect for the great, accordingly, is most apt to offend by its excess; our fellow-feeling for

the miserable, by its defect. Moralists exhort us to charity and compassion. They warn us against the fascination of greatness. This fascination, indeed, is so powerful, that the rich and the great are too often preferred to the wife and the virtuous. Nature has wifely judged that the distinction of ranks, the peace and order of fociety, would rest more fecurely upon the plain and palpable difference of birth and fortune, than upon the invisible and often uncertain difference of wisdom and virtue. The undistinguishing eyes of the great mob of mankind can well enough perceive the former: it is with difficulty that the nice discernment of the wife and the virtuous can sometimes distinguish the latter. In the order of all those recommendations, the benevolent wisdom of nature is equally evident.

It may, perhaps, be unnecessary to observe, that the combination of two, or more, of those exciting causes of kindness, increases the kindness. The favor and partiality which, when there is not envy in the case, we naturally bear to greatness, are much increased when it is joined with wisdom and virtue. If, notwithstanding that wisdom and virtue, the great man should fall into those missortunes, those dangers and distresses, to which the most exalted stations are often the most exposed, we are much more deeply interested in his fortune than we should be in that of a person equally virtuous, but in a more humble situation. The most interesting subjects of tragedies and remances are the missortunes of virtuous and

magnanimous kings and princes. If, by the wisdom and manhood of their exertions, they should extricate themselves from those missortunes, and recover completely their former superiority and security, we cannot help viewing them with the most enthusiastic and even extravagant admiration. The grief which we felt for their distress, the joy which we feel for their prosperity, seem to combine together in enhancing that partial admiration which we naturally conceive both for the station and the character.

When those different beneficent affectious happen to draw different ways, to determine by any precise rules in what cases we ought to comply with the one, and in what with the other, is, perhaps, altogether impossible. In what cases friendship ought to yield to gratitude, or gratitude to friendship; in what cases the strongest of all natural affections ought to yield to a regard for the fafety of those superiors upon whose safety often depends that of the whole fociety; and in what cases natural affection may, without impropriety, prevail over that regard; must be left altogether to the decision of the man within the breast, the supposed impartial spectator, the great judge and arbiter of our conduct. If we place ourselves completely in his fituation, if we really view ourselves with his eyes, and as he views us, and liften with diligent and reverential attention to what he fuggests to us, his voice will never deceive us. We shall stand in need of no casuistic rules to direct our conduct. These it is often impossible to accommodate

Sect. II.

accommodate to all the different shades and gradations of circumstance, character, and situation, to disserences and distinctions which, though not imperceptible, are, by their nicety and delicacy, often altogether undefinable. In that beautiful tragedy of Voltaire, the Orphan of China while we admire the magnanimity of Zamti, who is willing to facrifice the life of his own child, in order to preserve that of the only feeble remnant of his ancient sovereigns and masters; we not only pardon, but love the maternal tenderness of Idame, who, at the risque of discovering the important secret of her husband, reclaims her infant from the cruel hands of the Tartars, into which it had been delivered.

CHAP. II.

Of the order in which Societies are by nature recommended to our Beneficence.

THE same principles that direct the order in which individuals are recommended to our beneficence, direct that likewise in which societies are recommended to it. Those to which it is, or may be of most importance, are first and principally recommended to it.

The state or sovereignty in which we have been born and educated, and under the protection of which we continue to live, is, in ordinary cases, the greatest society upon whose happiness or misery, our good or bad conduct can have much influence,

Vol. II. F

It is accordingly, by nature, most strongly recommended to us. Not only we ourselves, but all the objects of our kindest affections, our children, our parents, our relations, our friends, our benefactors, all those whom we naturally love and revere the most, are commonly comprehended within it; and their prosperity and safety depend in some measure upon its prosperity and safety. It is by nature, therefore, endeared to us, not only by all our felfish, but by all our private bene-volent affections. Upon account of our own connexion with it, its prosperity and glory seem to reflect some fort of honor upon ourselves. When we compare it with other focieties of the fame kind, we are proud of its superiority, and mortified in some degree, if it appears in any respect below them. All the illustrious characters which it has produced in former times (for against those of our own times envy may fometimes prejudice us a little), its warriors, its statesmen, its poets, its philosophers, and men of letters of all kinds; we are disposed to view with the most partial admiration, and to rank them (fometimes most unjuftly) above those of all other nations. The patriot who lays down his life for the fafety, or even for the vain-glory of this fociety, appears to act with the most exact propriety. He appears to view himself in the light in which the impartial spectator naturally and necessarily views him, as but one of the multitude, in the eye of that equitable judge, of no more consequence than any other in it, but bound at all times to facrifice and devote

himself to the safety, to the service, and even to the glory of the greater number. But though this facrifice appears to be perfectly just and proper, we know how difficult it is to make it, and how few people are capable of making it. His conduct, therefore, excites not only our entire approbation, but our highest wonder and admiration. and feems to merit all the applause which can be due to the most heroic virtue. The traitor, on the contrary, who, in some peculiar situation, fancies he can promote his own little interest by betraying to the public enemy that of his native country; who, regardless of the judgment of the man within the breaft, prefers himself, in this respect so shamefully and so basely, to all those with whom he has any connexion; appears to be of all villains the most detestable.

The love of our own nation often disposes us to view, with the most malignant jealoufy and envy, the prosperity and aggrandizement of any other neighbouring nation. Independent and neighbouring nations, having no common superior to decide their disputes, all live in continual dread and fuspicion of one another. Each sovereign, expecting little justice from his neighbours, is difposed to treat them with as little as he expects from them. The regard for the laws of nations, or for those rules which independent states profess or pretend to think themselves bound to observe in their dealings with one another, is often very little more than mere pretence and profession. From th esmallest interest, upon the slightest provocation,

we fee those rules every day, either evaded or directly violated without shame or remorfe. Each nation foresees, or imagines it foresees, its own fubjugation in the increasing power and aggrandizement of any of its neighbours; and the mean principle of national prejudice is often founded upon the noble one of the love of our own The fentence with which the elder Cato is faid to have concluded every speech which he made in the fenate, whatever might be the subject, " It is my opinion likewise that Carthage " ought to be destroyed," was the natural expresfion of the favage patriotism of a strong but coarse mind, enraged almost to madness against a foreign nation from which his own had fuffered fo much. The more humane fentence with which Scipio Nafica is faid to have concluded all his speeches, " " It is my opinion likewise that Carthage ought not to " be destroyed," was the liberal expression of a more enlarged and enlightened mind, who felt no aversion to the prosperity even of an old enemy, when reduced to a state which could no longer be formidable to Rome. France and England may each of them have some reason to dread the increase of the naval and military power of the other; but for either of them to envy the internal happiness and prosperity of the other, the cultivation of its lands, the advancement of its manufactures, the increase of its commerce. the fecurity and number of its ports and harbours, its proficiency in all the liberal arts and sciences, is furely beneath the dignity of two fuch great

nations. These are all real improvements of the world we live in. Mankind are benefited, human nature is ennobled by them. In such improvements each nation ought, not only to endeavour itself to excel, but from the love of mankind, to promote, instead of obstructing the excellence of its neighbours. These are all proper objects of national emulation, not of national prejudice or envy.

The love of our own country feems not to be derived from the love of mankind. The former fentiment is altogether independent of the latter, and feems fometimes even to dispose us to act inconfistently with it. France may contain, perhaps, near three times the number of inhabitants which Great Britain contains. In the great fociety of mankind, therefore, the prosperity of France should appear to be an object of much greater importance than that of Great Britain. The British fubject, however, who, upon that account should prefer upon all occasions the prosperity of the former to that of the latter country, would not be thought a good citizen of Great Britain. We do not love our country merely as a part of the great fociety of mankind: we love it for its own fake, and independently of any fuch confideration. That wisdom which contrived the system of human affections, as well as that of every other part of nature, feems to have judged that the interest of the great society of mankind would be best promoted by directing the principal attention of each individual to that particular portion of it, which was most within the sphere both of his abilities and of his understanding.

National prejudices and hatreds feldom extend beyond neighbouring nations. We very weakly and foolishly, perhaps, call the French our natural enemies; and they perhaps, as weakly and foolishly, consider us in the same manner. Neither they nor we bear any fort of envy to the prosperity of China or Japan. It very rarely happens, however, that our good-will towards such distant countries can be exerted with much effect.

The most extensive public benevolence which can commonly be exerted with any confiderable effect, is that of the statesmen, who project and form alliances among neighbouring or not very distant nations, for the preservation either, of what is called, the balance of power, or of the general peace and tranquillity of the states within the circle of their negociations. The statesmen, however, who plan and execute fuch treaties, have feldom any thing in view, but the interest of their respective countries. Sometimes, indeed, their views are more extensive. The Count d'Avaux, the plenipotentiary of France, at the treaty of Munster, would have been willing to facrifice his life (according to the Cardinal de Retz, a man not over-credulous in the virtue of other people) in order to have restored, by that treaty, the general tranquillity of Europe. King William feems to have had a real zeal for the liberty and independency of the greater part of the fovereign states of Europe; which, perhaps, might be a good deal stimulated by his particular averfion to France, the state from which, during his time,

that liberty and independency were principally in danger. Some share of the same spirit seems to have descended to the first ministry of Queen Anne.

Every independent state is divided into many different orders and societies, each of which has its own particular powers, privileges, and immunities. Every individual is naturally more attached to his own particular order or society, than to any other. His own interest, his own vanity, the interest and vanity of many of his friends and companions, are commonly a good deal connected with it. He is ambitious to extend its privileges and immunities. He is zealous to defend them against the encroachments of every other order or society.

Upon the manner in which any state is divided into the different orders and societies which compose it, and upon the particular distribution which has been made of their respective powers, privileges, and immunities, depends, what is called, the

constitution of that particular state.

Upon the ability of each particular order or fociety to maintain its own powers, privileges, and immunities, against the encroachments of every other, depends the stability of that particular constitution. That particular constitution is necessarily more or less altered, whenever any of its subordinate parts is either raised above or depressed below whatever had been its former rank and condition.

All those different orders and focieties are dependent upon the flate to which they owe their fecurity and protection. That they are all fubordinate to that state, and established only in fubserviency to its prosperity and preservation, is a truth acknowledged by the most partial member of every one of them. It may often, however, be hard to convince him that the prosperity and preservation of the state require any diminution of the powers, privileges, and immunities of his own particular order or fociety. This partiality, though it may fometimes be unjust, may not, upon that account, be ufelefs. It checks the spirit of innovation. It tends to preserve whatever is the established balance among the different orders and focieties into which the flate is divided; and while it fometimes appears to obstruct some alterations of government which may be fashionable and popular at the time, it contributes in reality to the stability and permanency of the whole system.

The love of our country seems, in ordinary cases, to involve in it two different principles; first, a certain respect and reverence for that constitution or form of government which is actually established; and secondly, an earnest desire to render the condition of our fellow-citizens as safe, respectable, and happy as we can. He is not a citizen who is not disposed to respect the laws and to obey the civil magistrate; and he is certainly not a good citizen who does not wish to promote, by every means in his power, the welfare of the whole society of his fellow-citizens.

In peaceable and quiet times, those two principles generally coincide and lead to the same conduct. The fupport of the established government seems evidently the best expedient for maintaining the fafe, respectable, and happy situation of our fellowcitizens; when we fee that this government actually maintains them in that fituation. But in times of public discontent, faction, and disorder, those two different principles may draw different ways, and even a wife man may be disposed to think fome alteration necessary in that constitution or form of government, which, in its actual condition appears plainly unable to maintain the public tranquillity. In fuch cases, however, it often requires, perhaps, the highest effort of political wisdom to determine when a real patriot ought to support and endeavour to re-establish the authority of the old fystem, and when he ought to give way to the more daring, but often dangerous spirit of innovation.

Foreign war and civil faction are the two fituations which afford the most splendid opportunities for the display of public spirit. The hero who serves his country successfully in foreign war gratifies the wishes of the whole nation, and is, upon that account, the object of universal gratitude and admiration. In times of civil discord, the leaders of the contending parties, though they may be admired by one half of their sellow-citizens, are commonly execrated by the other. Their characters and the merit of their respective services appear commonly more doubtful. The glory which is acquired by foreign

war is, upon this account, almost always more pure and more splendid than that which can be

acquired in civil faction.

The leader of the successful party, however, if he has authority enough to prevail upon his own friends to act with proper temper and moderation (which he frequently has not), may sometimes render to his country a service much more essential and important than the greatest victories and the most extensive conquess. He may reflablish and improve the constitution, and from the very doubtful and ambiguous character of the leader of a party, he may assume the greatest and noblest of all characters, that of the reformer and legislator of a great state; and, by the wisdom of his institutions secure the internal tranquillity and happiness of his fellow-citizens for many succeeding generations.

Amidst the turbulence and disorder of faction, a certain spirit of system is apt to mix itself with that public spirit which is sounded upon the love of humanity, upon a real sellow-seeling with the inconveniences and distresses to which some of our sellow-citizens may be exposed. This spirit of system commonly takes the direction of that more gentle public spirit; always animates it, and often inflames it even to the madness of fanaticism. The leaders of the discontented party seldom fail to hold out some plausible plan of reformation which, they pretend, will not only remove the inconveniences and relieve the distresses immediately complained of, but will prevent, in all time coming, any return of the like inconveniences

and diffresses. They often propose, upon this account, to new-model the conflitution, and to alter, in some of its most effential parts, that fystem of government under which the subjects of a great empire have enjoyed, perhaps, peace, fecurity, and even glory, during the course of feveral centuries together. The great body of the party are commonly intoxicated with the imaginary beauty of this ideal fystem, of which they have no experience, but which has been reprefented to them in all the most dazzling colors in which the eloquence of their leaders could paint it. Those leaders themselves, though they originally may have meant nothing but their own aggrandizement, become many of them in time the dupes of their own fophistry, and are as eager for this great reformation as the weakest and foolishest of their followers. Even though the leaders should have preserved their own heads, as indeed they commonly do, free from this fanaticism, yet they dare not always disappoint the expectation of their followers; but are often obliged, though contrary to their principle and their conscience, to act as if they were under the common delufion. The violence of the party. refusing all palliatives, all temperaments, all reasonable accommodations, by requiring too much frequently obtains nothing; and those inconveniences and distresses which, with a little moderation, might in a great measure have been removed and relieved, are left altogether without the hope of a remedy.

The man whose public spirit is prompted altogether by humanity and benevolence, will respect the established powers and privileges even of individuals, and still more those of the great orders and focieties, into which the state is divided. Though he should consider some of them as in some meafure abusive, he will content himself with moderating, what he often cannot annihilate without great violence. When he cannot conquer the rooted prejudices of the people by reason and persuasion, he will not attempt to subdue them. by force; but will religiously observe what, by Cicero, is justly called the divine maxim of Plato. never to use violence to his country no more than to his parents. He will accommodate, as well as he can, his public arrangements to the confirmed habits and prejudices of the people; and will remedy as well as he can, the inconveniences which may flow from the want of those regulations which the people are averse to submit to. When he cannot establish the right, he will not disdain to ameliorate the wrong; but like Solon, when he cannot establish the best system of laws, he will endeavour to establish the best that the people can bear.

The man of fystem, on the contrary, is apt to be very wife in his own conceit; and is often so enamoured with the supposed beauty of his own ideal plan of government, that he cannot suffer the smallest deviation from any part of it. He goes on to establish it completely and in all its parts, without any regard either to the great interests, or to

the strong prejudices which may oppose it. He feems to imagine that he can arrange the different members of a great fociety with as much ease as the hand arranges the different pieces upon a chess-board. He does not consider that the pieces upon the chess-board have no other principle of motion besides that which the hand impresses upon them; but that, in the great chess-board of human fociety, every fingle piece has a principle of motion of its own, altogether different from that which the legislature might chuse to impress upon it. If those two principles coincide and act in the same direction, the game of human society will go on eafily and harmoniously, and is very likely to be happy and fuccessful. If they are opposite or different, the game will go on miserably, and the fociety must be at all times in the highest degree of disorder.

Some, general, and even systematical, idea of the perfection of policy and law, may no doubt be necessary for directing the views of the statesman. But to insist upon establishing, and upon establishing all at once, and in spite of all opposition, every thing which that idea may seem to require, must often be the highest degree of arrogance. It is to erect his own judgment into the supreme standard of right and wrong. It is to fancy himself the only wise and worthy man in the commonwealth, and that his fellow-citizens should accommodate themselves to him and not he to them. It is upon this account, that of all political speculators, sover-

eign princes are by far the most dangerous. This arrogance is perfectly familiar to them. They entertain no doubt of the immense superiority of their own judgment. When fuch imperial and royal reformers, therefore, condefcend to contemplate the constitution of the country which is committed to their government, they feldom fee any thing fo wrong in it as the obstructions which it may fometimes oppose to the execution of their own will. They hold in contempt the divine maxim of Plato, and confider the state as made for themselves, not themselves for the state. The great object of their reformation, therefore, is to remove those obstructions; to reduce the authority of the nobility; to take away the privileges of cities and provinces, and to render both the greatest individuals and the greatest orders of the flate, as incapable of opposing their commands, as the weakest and most infignificant.

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CHAP. III.

Of universal Benevolence.

HOUGH our effectual good offices can very feldom be extended to any wider fociety than that of our own country; our good-will is circumfcribed by no boundary, but may embrace the immensity of the universe. We cannot form the idea of any innocent and fenfible being, whose happiness we should not defire, or to whose misery, when distinctly brought home to the imagination. we should not have some degree of aversion. The idea of a mischievous, though sensible, being, indeed, naturally provokes our hatred: but the ill-will which, in this case, we bear to it, is really the effect of our universal benevolence. It is the effect of the sympathy which we feel with the mifery and refentment of those other innocent and fensible beings, whose happiness is disturbed by its malice.

This univerfal benevolence, how noble and generous foever, can be the fource of no folid happiness to any man who is not thoroughly convinced that all the inhabitants of the universe, the meanest as well as the greatest, are under the immediate care and protection of that great, benevolent, and all-wise Being, who directs all the movements of nature; and who is determined, by his own unalterable perfections, to maintain in it, at all times, the greatest possible quantity of happiness. To this

universal benevolence, on the contrary, the very suspicion of a satherless world, must be the most melancholy of all reslections; from the thought that all the unknown regions of infinite and incomprehensible space may be filled with nothing but endless misery and wretchedness. All the splendor of the highest prosperity can never enlighten the gloom with which so dreadful an idea must necessarily overshadow the imagination; nor, in a wise and virtuous man, can all the sorrow of the most afflicting adversity ever dry up the joy which necessarily springs from the habitual and thorough conviction of the truth of the contrary system.

The wife and virtuous man is at all times willing that his own private interest should be sacrificed to the public interest of his own particular order or fociety. He is at all times willing, too, that the interest of this order or society should be facrificed to the greater interest of the state or sovereignty, of which it is only a fubordinate part. He should, therefore, be equally willing that all those inferior interests should be facrificed to the greater interest of the universe, to the interest of that great society of all fensible and intelligent beings, of which God himself is the immediate administrator and director. If he is deeply impressed with the habitual and thorough conviction that this benevolent and all-wife Being can admit into the fystem of his government, no partial evil which is not

necessary for the universal good, he must consider all the misfortunes which may befal himself, his

friends,

friends, his fociety, or his country, as necessary for the prosperity of the universe, and therefore as what he ought, not only to submit to with resignation, but as what he himself, if he had known all the connexions and dependencies of things, ought sincerely and devoutly to have wished for.

Nor does this magnanimous refignation to the will of the great Director of the universe, feem in any respect beyond the reach of human nature. Good foldiers, who both love and trust their general, frequently march with more gaiety and alacrity to the forlorn station, from which they never expect to return, than they would to one where there was neither difficulty nor danger. In marching to the latter, they could feel no other fentiment than that of the dulness of ordinary duty: in marching to the former, they feel that they are making the noblest exertion which it is possible for man to make. They know that their general would not have ordered them upon this station. had it not been necessary for the safety of the army, for the fuccess of the war. They cheerfully facrifice their own little fystems to the prosperity of a greater system. They take an affectionate leave of their comrades, to whom they wish all happiness and fuccess; and march out, not only with submissive obedience, but often with shouts of the most joyful exultation, to that fatal, but folendid and honorable station to which they are appointed. No conductor of an army can deferve more unlimited truft, more ardent and zealous

Vol. II.

affection, than the great Conductor of the universe. In the greatest public as well as private disasters, a wise man ought to consider that he himself, his friends and countrymen, have only been ordered upon the forlorn station of the universe; that had it not been necessary for the good of the whole, they would not have been so ordered; and that it is their duty, not only with humble resignation to submit to this allotment, but to endeavour to embrace it with alacrity and joy. A wise man should surely be capable of doing what a good soldier holds himself at all times in readiness to do.

The idea of that divine Being, whose benevolence and wisdom, have, from all eternity. contrived and conducted the immense machine of the universe, fo as at all times to produce the greatest possible quantity of happiness, is certainly of all the objects of human contemplation by far the most sublime. Every other thought necesfarily appears mean in the comparison. The man whom we believe to be principally occupied in this fublime contemplation, feldom fails to be the object of our highest veneration; and though his life should be altogether contemplative, we often regard him with a fort of religious respect much fuperior to that with which we look upon the most active and useful servant of the commonwealth. The Meditations of Marcus Antoninus, which turn principally upon this fubject, have contributed more, perhaps, to the general admiration of his character, than all the different transactions of his just, merciful, and beneficent reign.

The administration of the great system of the universe, however, the care of the universal happiness of all rational and sensible beings, is the business of God and not of man. To man is alloted a much humbler department, but one much more fuitable to the weakness of his powers, and to the narrowness of his comprehension; the care of his own happiness, of that of his family, his friends, his country: that he is occupied in contemplating the more fublime, can never be an excuse for his neglecting the more humble department; and he must not expose himself to the charge which Avidius Cassius is said to have brought. perhaps unjustly, against Marcus Antoninus; that while he employed himfelf in philosophical speculations, and contemplated the prosperity of the universe, he neglected that of the Roman empire. The most sublime speculation of the contemplative philosopher can scarce compensate the neglect of the fmallest active duty.

SECTION III.

Of Self-command.

THE man who acts according to the rules of perfect prudence, of strict justice, and of proper benevolence, may be said to be perfectly virtuous. But the most perfect knowledge of those rules will not alone enable him to act in this manner: his own passions are very apt to mislead him; sometimes to drive him and sometimes to seduce him to violate all the rules which he himself, in all his sober and cool hours, approves of. The most perfect knowledge, if it is not supported by the most perfect self-command, will not always enable him to do his duty.

Some of the best of the ancient moralists seem to have considered those passions as divided into two different classes: first, into those which it requires a considerable exertion of self-command to restrain even for a single moment; and secondly, into those which it is easy to restrain for a single moment, or even for a short period of time; but which, by their continual and almost incessant solicitations, are, in the course of a life, very apt

to mislead into great deviations.

Fear and anger, together with some other passions which are mixed or connected with them, constitute the first class. The love of ease, of pleasure, of applause, and of many other lessish gratifications, constitute the second.

Extravagant fear and furious anger, it is often difficult to restrain even for a single moment. The love of ease, of pleasure, of applause, and other selfish gratifications, it is always easy to restrain for a single moment, or even for a short period of time; but, by their continual solicitations, they often mislead us into many weaknesses which we have afterwards much reason to be assumed of. The sormer set of passions may often be said to drive, the latter, to seduce us from our duty. The command of the sormer was, by the ancient moralists above alluded to, denominated sortitude, manhood, and strength of mind; that of the latter, temperance, decency, modesty, and moderation.

The command of each of those two sets of passions, independent of the beauty which it derives from its utility; from its enabling us upon all occasions, to act according to the dictates of prudence, of justice, and of proper benevolence; has a beauty of its own, and seems to deserve for its own sake a certain degree of esteem and admiration. In the one case, the strength and greatness of the exertion excites some degree of that esteem and admiration. In the other, the uniformity the equality and unremitting steadiness of that exertion.

The man who, in danger, in torture, upon the approach of death, preserves his tranquillity unaltered, and suffers no word, no gesture to escape him which does not perfectly accord with the seelings of the most indifferent spectator, necessarily

commands a very high degree of admiration. If he fuffers in the cause of liberty and justice, for the fake of humanity and the love of his country, the most tender compassion for his sufferings, the strongest indignation against the injustice of his persecutors, the warmest sympathetic gratitude for his beneficent intentions, the highest sense of his merit, all join and mix themselves with the admiration of his magnanimity, and often inflame that fentiment into the most enthusiastic and rapturous veneration. The heroes of ancient and modern history, who are remembered with the most peculiar favor and affection, are, many of them, those who, in the cause of truth, liberty, and justice, have perished upon the scaffold, and who behaved there with that eafe and dignity which became them. Had the enemies of Socrates fuffered him to die quietly in his bed, the glory even of that great philosopher might possibly never have acquired that dazzling splendor in which it has been beheld in all fucceeding ages. In the English history, when we look over the illustrious heads which have been engraven by Vertue and Howbraken, there is fcarce any body, I imagine, who does not feel that the axe, the emblem of having been beheaded, which is engraved under some of the most illustrious of them; under those of the Sir Thomas Mores, of the Rhaleighs, the Ruffels, the Sydneys, &c. sheds a real dignity and interestingness over the characters to which it is affixed, much superior to what they can derive from all the futile ornaments of heraldry. with which they are fometimes accompanied.

Nor does this magnanimity give lustre only to the characters of innocent and virtuous men. It draws some degree of savorable regard even upon those of the greatest criminals; and when a robber or highwayman is brought to the scassfold, and behaves there with decency and sirmness, though we perfectly approve of his punishment, we often cannot help regretting that a man who possessed such great and noble powers should have been

capable of fuch mean enormities.

War is the great school both for acquiring and exercifing this species of magnanimity. Death, as we fay, is the king of terrors; and the man who has conquered the fear of death, is not likely to lose his presence of mind at the approach of any other natural evil. In war, men become familiar with death, and are thereby necessarily cured of that fuperstitious horror with which it is viewed by the weak and unexperienced. They confider it merely as the loss of life, and as no further the object of aversion than as life may happen to be that of defire. They learn from experience, too, that many feemingly great dangers are not fo great as they appear; and that, with courage, activity, and presence of mind, there is often a good probability of extricating themselves with honor from situations where at first they could see no hope. The dread of death is thus greatly diminished; and the confidence or hope of escaping it, augmented. They learn to expose themselves to danger with less reluctance. They are less anxious to get out of

it, and less apt to lose their presence of mind while they are in it. It is this habitual contempt of danger and death which ennobles the profession of a soldier, and bestows upon it, in the natural apprehensions of mankind, a rank and dignity superior to that of any other profession. The skilful and successful exercise of this profession, in the service of their country, seems to have constituted the most distinguishing feature in the character of

the favorite heroes of all ages.

Great warlike exploit, though undertaken contrary to every principle of justice, and carried on without any regard to humanity, sometimes interests us, and commands even some degree of a certain fort of esteem for the very worthless characters which conduct it. We are interested even in the exploits of the Buccaneers; and read with some fort of esteem and admiration, the history of the most worthless men, who, in pursuit of the most criminal purposes, endured greater hardships, surmounted greater difficulties, and encountered greater dangers, than, perhaps, any which the ordinary course of history gives an account of.

The command of anger appears upon many occasions not less generous and noble than that of fear. The proper expression of just indignation composes many of the most splendid and admired passages both of ancient and modern eloquence. The Philippics of Demosthenes, the Catalinarians of Cicero, derive their whole beauty from the noble propriety with which this passion is expressed. But

this just indignation is nothing but anger restrained and properly attempered to what the impartial spectator can enter into. The blustering and noisy paffion which goes beyond this, is always odious and offensive, and interests us, not for the angry man, but for the man with whom he is angry. The nobleness of pardoning appears, upon many occasions, superior even to the most perfect propriety of refenting. When either proper acknowledgments have been made by the offending party: or, even without any fuch acknowledgments, when the public interest requires that the most mortal enemies should unite for the discharge of fome important duty, the man who can cast away all animofity, and act with confidence and cordiality towards the person who had most grievously offended him, seems justly to merit our highest admiration.

The command of anger, however, does not always appear in such splendid colors. Fear is contrary to anger, and is often the motive which restrains it; and in such cases the meanness of the motive takes away all the nobleness of the restraint. Anger prompts to attack, and the indulgence of it seems sometimes to show a fort of courage and superiority to sear. The indulgence of anger is sometimes an object of vanity. That of sear never is. Vain and weak men, among their inferiors, or those who dare not resist them, often affect to be oftentatiously passionate, and sancy that they show, what is called, spirit in being so. A bully tells many stories of his own insolence.

which are not true, and imagines that he thereby renders himself, is not more amiable and respectable, at least more formidable to his audience. Modern manners, which, by favoring the practice of duelling, may be said, in some cases, to encourage private revenge, contribute, perhaps, a good deal to render, in modern times, the restraint of anger by fear still more contemptible than it might otherwise appear to be. There is always something dignified in the command of fear, whatever may be the motive upon which it is founded. It is not so with the command of anger. Unless it is founded altogether in the sense of decency, of dignity, and propriety, it never is perfectly agreeable.

To act according to the dictates of prudence, of justice, and proper beneficence, feems to have no great merit where there is no temptation to do otherwise. But to act with cool deliberation in the midst of the greatest dangers and difficulties; to observe religiously the sacred rules of justice in fpite both of the greatest interests which might tempt, and the greatest injuries which might provoke us to violate them; never to fuffer the benevolence of our temper to be damped or discouraged by the malignity and ingratitude of the individuals towards whom it may have been exercifed; is the character of the most exalted wifdom and virtue. Self-command is not only itself a great virtue, but from it all the other virtues feem to derive their principal lustre.

The command of fear, the command of anger, are always great and noble powers. When they

are directed by justice and benevolence, they are not only great virtues, but increase the splendor of those other virtues. They may, however, fometimes be directed by very different motives; and in this case, though still great and respectable, they may be excessively dangerous. The most intrepid valor may be employed in the cause of the greatest injustice. Amidst great provocations, apparent tranquillity and good humor may fometimes conceal the most determined and cruel resolution to revenge. The strength of mind requifite for fuch diffimulation, though always and necessarily contaminated by the baseness of falsehood, has, however, been often much admired by many people of no contemptible judgment. The diffimulation of Catharine of Medicis is often celebrated by the profound historian Davila; that of Lord Digby, afterwards Earl of Briftol, by the grave and confcientious Lord Clarendon; that of the first Ashley Earl of Shaftesbury, by the judicious Mr. Locke. Even Cicero feems to confider this deceitful character, not indeed as of the highest dignity, but as not unsuitable to a certain flexibility of manners, which, he thinks, may, notwithstanding, be, upon the whole, both agreeable and respectable. He exemplifies it by the characters of Homer's Ulysses, of the Athenian Themistocles, of the Spartan Lysander, and of the Roman Marcus Craffus. This character of dark and deep diffimulation occurs most commonly in times of great public diforder; amidst the vio-Ience of faction and civil war. When law has

become in a great measure impotent, when the most persect innocence cannot alone insure safety, regard to self-desence obliges the greater part of men to have recourse to dexterity, to address, and to apparent accommodation to whatever happens to be, at the moment, the prevailing party. This salse character, too, is frequently accompanied with the coolest and most determined courage. The proper exercise of it supposes that courage, as death is commonly the certain consequence of detection. It may be employed indifferently, either to exasperate or to allay those furious animosities of adverse factions which impose the necessity of assuring it; and though it may sometimes be useful, it is at least equally liable to be excessively pernicious.

The command of the less violent and turbulent passions seems much less liable to be abused to any pernicious purpose. Temperance, decency, modesty, and moderation, are always amiable, and can feldom be directed to any bad end. It is from the unremitting steadiness of those gentler exertions of felf-command, that the amiable virtue of chastity, that the respectable virtues of industry and frugality, derive all that fober luftre which attends them. The conduct of all those who are contented to walk in the humble paths of private and peaceable life, derives from the same principle the greater part of the beauty and grace which belong to it; a beauty and grace, which, though much less dazzling, is not always less pleasing than those which accompany the more splendid actions of the hero, the statesman, or the legislator.

After what has already been faid, in feveral different parts of this discourse concerning the nature of felf-command, I judge it unnecessary to enter into any further detail concerning those virtues. I shall only observe at present, that the point of propriety, the degree of any passion which the impartial spectator approves of, is differently fituated in different passions. In some passions the excess is less disagreeable than the defect; and in such passions the point of propriety feems to stand high, or nearer to the excess than to the defect. In other passions, the defect is less difagreeable than the excess; and in fuch passions the point of propriety feems to fland low, or nearer to the defect than to the excess. The former are the passions which the spectator is most, the latter. those which he is least disposed to sympathize with. The former, too, are the passions of which the immediate feeling or fensation is agreeable to the person principally concerned; the latter, those of which it is difagreeable. It may be laid down as a general rule, that the passions which the spectator is most disposed to sympathize with, and in which, upon that account, the point of propriety may be faid to fland high, are those of which the immediate feeling or fensation is more or less agreeable to the person principally concerned: and that, on the contrary, the passions which the spectator is least disposed to sympathize with, and in which, upon that account, the point of propriety may be faid to fland low, are those of which the immediate feeling or fensation is more or less disagreeable.

or even painful, to the person principally concerned. This general rule, so far as I have been able to observe, admits not of a single exception. A few examples will at once, both sufficiently explain it and demonstrate the truth of it.

. The disposition to the affections which tend to unite men in fociety, to humanity, kindness, natural affection, friendship, esteem, may sometimes be excessive. Even the excess of this disposition, however, renders a man interesting to every body. Though we blame it, we still regard it with compassion, and even with kindness, and never with diflike. We are more forry for it than angry at it. To the person himself, the indulgence even of fuch excessive affections is, upon many occasions, not only agreeable, but delicious. Upon fome occasions, indeed, especially when directed, as is too often the case, towards unworthy objects, it exposes him to much real and heart-felt diffress. Even upon fuch occasions, however, a well-disposed mind regards him with the most exquisite pity. and feels the highest indignation against those who affect to despise him for his weakness and imprudence. The defect of this disposition, on the contrary, what is called hardness of heart, while it renders a man infenfible to the feelings and distresses of other people, renders other people equally infenfible to his; and, by excluding him from the friendship of all the world, excludes him from the best and most comfortable of all focial enjoyments.

The disposition to the affections which drive

men from one another, and which tend, as it were. to break the bands of human fociety; the disposition to anger, hatred, envy, malice, revenge; is, on the contrary, much more apt to offend by its excess than by its defect. The excess renders a man wretched and miserable in his own mind and the object of hatred, and fometimes even of horror. to other people. The defect is very feldom complained of. It may, however, be defective. The want of proper indignation is a most essential defect in the manly character, and, upon many occasions. renders a man incapable of protecting either himself or his friends from infult and injustice. Even that principle, in the excess and improper direction of which confifts the odious and detestable passion of envy, may be defective. Envy is that passion which views with malignant dislike the superiority of those who are really entitled to all the superiority they possess. The man, however, who, in matters of confequence, tamely fuffers other people, who are entitled to no fuch fuperiority, to rife above him or get before him, is justly condemned as mean-spirited. This weakness is commonly founded in indolence, fometimes in good nature, in an aversion to opposition, to bustle and solicitation, and fometimes, too, in a fort of ill-judged magnanimity, which fancies that it can always continue to despife the advantage which it then despises, and therefore, so easily gives up. Such weakness, however, is commonly followed by much regret and repentance; and what had fome appearance of magnanimity in the

beginning frequently gives place to a most malignant envy in the end, and to a hatred of that superiority, which those who have once attained it, may often become really entitled to, by the very circumstance of having attained it. In order to live comfortably in the world, it is, upon all occasions, as necessary to defend our dignity and rank, as it is to defend our life or our fortune.

Our fenfibility to personal danger and distress, like that to personal provocation, is much more apt to offend by its excess than by its defect. No character is more contemptible than that of a coward: no character is more admired than that of the man who faces death with intrepidity, and maintains his tranquillity and presence of mind amidst the most dreadful dangers. We esteem the man who supports pain and even torture with manhood and firmness; and we can have little regard for him who finks under them, and abandons himself to useless outcries and womanish lamentations. A fretful temper, which feels, with too much fensibility, every little cross accident, renders a man miserable in himself and offensive to other people. A calm one, which does not allow its tranquillity to be disturbed, either by the small injuries, or by the little difasters incident to the usual course of human affairs; but which, amidst the natural and moral evils infesting the world, lays its account and is contented to fuffer a little from both, is a bleffing to the man himfelf, and gives eafe and fecurity to all his companions.

Our fenfibility, however, both to our own injuries and to our own misfortunes, though generally too strong, may likewise be too weak. The man who feels little for his own misfortunes must always feel less for those of other people, and be less disposed to relieve them. The man who has little refentment for the injuries which are done to himself, must always have less for those which are done to other people, and be less disposed either to protect or to avenge them. A stupid insensibility to the events of human life necessarily extinguishes all that keen and earnest attention to the propriety of our own conduct. which constitutes the real essence of virtue. We can feel little anxiety about the propriety of our own actions, when we are indifferent about the events which may refult from them. The man who feels the full diftress of the calamity which has befallen him, who feels the whole bafeness of the injustice which has been done to him, but who feels still more strongly what the dignity of his own character requires; who does not abandon himself to the guidance of the undisciplined passions which his situation might naturally inspire; but who governs his whole behaviour and conduct according to those restrained and corrected emotions which the great inmate, the great demi-god within the breast prescribes and approves of; is alone the real man of virtue, the only real and proper object of love, respect, and admiration. Infenfibility and that noble firmness, that exalted felf-command, which is founded in the fense VOL. II.

of dignity and propriety, are so far from being altogether the same, that in proportion as the former takes place, the merit of the latter is, in

many cases, entirely taken away.

. But though the total want of fenfibility to perfonal injury, to perfonal danger and diffress, would, in fuch fituations, take away the whole merit of felf-command, that fenfibility, however, may very eafily be too exquifite, and it frequently is so. When the sense of propriety, when the authority of the judge within the breaft, can control this extreme fenfibility, that authority must no doubt appear very noble and very great. But the exertion of it may be too fatiguing; it may have too much to do. The individual, by a great effort, may behave perfeetly well. But the contest between the two principles, the warfare within the breaft, may be too violent to be at all confiftent with internal tranquillity and happiness. The wife man whom Nature has endowed with this too exquifite fenfibility, and whose too lively feelings have not been fufficiently blunted and hardened by early education and proper exercise, will avoid. as much as duty and propriety will permit, the fituations for which he is not perfectly fitted. The man whose feeble and delicate constitution renders him too fensible to pain, to hardship, and to every fort of bodily diffress, should not wantonly embrace the profession of a foldier. The man of too much fenfibility to injury, should not rashly engage in the contests of faction. Though the fense

of propriety should be strong enough to command all those sensibilities, the composure of the mind must always be disturbed in the struggle. In this disorder the judgment cannot always maintain its ordinary acuteness and precision; and though he may always mean to act properly, he may often act rashly and imprudently, and in a manner which he himself will, in the succeeding part of his life, be for ever ashamed of. A certain intrepidity, a certain firmness of nerves and hardiness of constitution, whether natural or acquired, are undoubtedly the best preparatives for all the great exertions of self-command.

Though war and faction are certainly the best schools for forming every man to this hardiness and sirmness of temper, though they are the best remedies for curing him of the opposite weaknesses, yet, if the day of trial should happen to come before he has completely learned his lesson, before the remedy has had time to produce its proper esset, the consequences might not be agreeable.

Our fensibility to the pleasures, to the amusements and enjoyments of human life, may offend, in the same manner, either by its excess or by its defect. Of the two, however, the excess seems less disagreeable than the defect. Both to the spectator and to the person principally concerned, a strong propensity to joy is certainly more pleasing than a dull insensibility to the objects of amusement and diversion. We are charmed with the gaiety of youth, and even with the playsulness of childhood: but we soon grow weary of

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the flat and taffeless gravity which too frequently accompanies old age. When this propenfity, indeed, is not restrained by the sense of propriety. when it is unfuitable to the time or to the place, to the age or to the fituation of the person, when, to indulge it, he neglects either his interest or his duty; it is justly blamed as excessive, and as hurtful both to the individual and to the fociety. the greater part of fuch cases, however, what is chiefly to be found fault with is, not fo much the strength of the propensity to joy, as the weakness of the fense of propriety and duty. A young man who has no relish for the diversions and amusements that are natural and fuitable to his age, who talks of nothing but his book or his bufinels, is difliked as formal and pedantic; and we give him no credit for his abstinence even from improper indulgences, to which he feems to have fo little inclination.

The principle of felf - estimation may be too high, and it may likewise be too low. It is so very agreeable to think highly, and so very disagreeable to think meanly of ourselves, that, to the person himself, it cannot well be doubted, but that some degree of excess must be much less disagreeable than any degree of defect. But to the impartial spectator, it may perhaps be thought, things must appear quite differently, and that to him, the defect must always be less disagreeable than the excess. And in our companions, no doubt, we much more frequently complain of the latter than of the former. When they assume upon us, or set themselves before us, their self-estimation

mortifies our own. Our own pride and vanity prompt us to accuse them of pride and vanity, and we cease to be the impartial spectators of When the fame companions, their conduct. however, fuffer any other man to assume over them a superiority which does not belong to him. we not only blame them, but often despise them as mean - spirited. When, on the contrary, among other people, they push themselves a little more forward, and scramble to an elevation disproportioned, as we think, to their merit, though we may not perfectly approve of their conduct, we are often, upon the whole, diverted with it; and, where there is no envy in the case, we are almost always much less displeased with them, than we should have been, had they suffered themselves to fink below their proper station.

In estimating our own merit, injudging of our own character and conduct, there are two disserent standards to which we naturally compare them. The one is the idea of exact propriety and perfection, so far as we are each of us capable of comprehending that idea. The other is that degree of approximation to this idea which is commonly attained in the world, and which the greater part of our friends and companions, of our rivals and competitors, may have actually arrived at. We very seldom (I am disposed to think, we never) attempt to judge of ourselves without giving more or less attention to both these different standards. But the attention of different men, and even of the same man at different times, is often

102 OF THE CHARACTER PartVI.

very unequally divided between them; and is sometimes principally directed towards the one, and sometimes towards the other.

So far as our attention is directed towards the first standard, the wisest and best of us all, can, in his own character and conduct, see nothing but weakness and imperfection; can discover no ground for arrogance and presumption, but a great deal for humility, regret, and repentance. So far as our attention is directed towards the second, we may be affected either in the one way or in the other, and seel ourselves, either really above, or really below the standard to which we

compare ourfelves.

The wife and virtuous man directs his principal attention to the first standard; the idea of exact propriety and perfection. There exists in the mind of every man, an idea of this kind, gradually formed from his observations upon the character and conduct both of himself and of other people. It is the flow, gradual, and progressive work of the great demi-god within the breaft, the great judge and arbiter of conduct. This idea is in every man more or less accurately drawn, its coloring is more or less just, its outlines are more or less exactly defigned, according to the delicacy and acuteness of that sensibility, with which those observations were made, and according to the care and attention employed in making them. In the wife and virtuous man they have been made with the most acute and delicate sensibility, and the utmost care and attention have been employed in

making them. Every day some featureis improved; every day some blemish is corrected. He has studied this idea more than other people, he comprehends it more distinctly, he has formed a much more correct image of it, and is much more deeply enamoured of its exquifite and divine beauty. He endeavours as well as he can, to affimilate his own character to this archetype of perfection. But he imitates the work of a divine artist, which can never be equalled. He feels the imperfect fuccess of all his best endeavours, and sees, with grief and affliction, in how many different features the mortal copy falls fhort of the immortal original. He remembers, with concern and humiliation, how often, from want of attention, from want of judgment, from want of temper, he has, both in words and actions, both in conduct and conversation, violated the exact rules of perfect propriety; and has fo far departed from that model, according to which he wished to fashion his own character and conduct. When he directs his attention towards the fecond standard, indeed, that degree of excellence which his friends and acquaintances have commonly arrived at, he may be fenfible of his own fuperiority. But, as his principal attention is always directed towards the first standard, he is necessarily much more humbled by the one comparifon, than he ever can be elevated by the other. He is never fo elated as to look down with infolence even upon those who are really below him. He feels so well his own imperfection, he knows so well the difficulty with which he attained his

own diffant approximation to reclitude, that he cannot regard with contempt the still greater imperfection of other people. Far from infulting over their inferiority, he views it with the most indulgent commiseration, and, by his advice as well as example, is at all times willing to promote their further advancement. If, in any particular qualification, they happen to be fuperior to him (for who is so perfect as not to have many fuperiors in many different qualifications?) far from envying their fuperiority, he, who knows how difficult it is to excel, esteems and honors their excellence; and never fails to bestow upon it the full measure of applause which it deserves. His whole mind, in fhort, is deeply impressed, his whole behaviour and deportment are distinctly stamped with the character of real modesty; with that of a very moderate estimation of his own merit, and, at the same time, of a full sense of the merit of other people.

In all the liberal and ingenious arts, in painting, in poetry, in music, in eloquence, in philosophy, the great artist feels always the real imperfection of his own best works, and is more fensible than any man how much they fall short of that ideal perfection of which he has formed some conception, which he imitates as well as he can, but which he despairs of ever equalling. It is the inferior artist only, who is ever perfectly satisfied with his own performances. He has little conception of this ideal perfection, about which he has little employed his thoughts; and

it is chiefly to the works of other artiffs, of, perhaps, a still lower order, that he deigns to compare his own works. Boileau, the great French poet (in some of his works, perhaps not inferior to the greatest poet of the same kind, either ancient or modern), used to say, that no great man was ever completely fatisfied with his own works. His acquaintance Santeuil (a writer of Latin verles, and who, on account of that school-boy-accomplishment, had the weakness to fancy himself a poet), affured him, that he himself was always completely fatisfied with his own. Boileau replied, with, perhaps, an arch ambiguity, That he certainly was the only great man that ever was fo. Boileau, in judging of his own works, compared them with the standard of ideal perfection, which, in his own particular branch of the poetic art, he had, I presume, meditated as deeply, and conceived as distinctly, as it is posfible for man to conceive it. Santeuil, in judging of his own works, compared them, I suppose, chiefly to those of the other Latin poets of his own time, to the greater part of whom he was certainly very far from being inferior. But to support and finish off, if I may say so, the conduct and conversation of a whole life to some resemblance of this ideal persection, is surely much more difficult than to work up to an equal refemblance any of the productions of any of the ingenious arts. The artist sits down to his work undisturbed, at leifure, in the full possesfion and recollection of all his skill, experience.

and knowledge. The wife man must support the propriety of his own conduct in health and in sickness, in success and in disappointment, in the hour of fatigue and drowsy indolence, as well as in that of the most awakened attention. The most sudden and unexpected assaults of dissiculty and distress must never surprise him. The injustice of other people must never provoke him to injustice. The violence of faction must never confound him. All the hardships and hazards of war must never

either dishearten or appal him.

Of the persons who, in estimating their own merit, in judging of their own character and conduct, direct by far the greater part of their attention to the second standard, to that ordinary degree of excellence which is commonly attained by other people, there are fome who really and justly feel themselves very much above it, and who, by every intelligent and impartial spectator, are acknowledged to be fo. The attention of fuch persons, however, being always principally directed, not to the standard of ideal, but to that of ordinary perfection, they have little fense of their own weaknesses and imperfections; they have little modesty; are often assuming, arrogant, and presumptuous; great admirers of themselves, and great contemners of other people. Though their characters are in general much less correct, and their merit much inferior to that of the man of real and modest virtue; yet their excessive prefumption, founded upon their own excessive felfadmiration, dazzles the multitude, and often imposes

even upon those who are much superior to the multitude. The frequent, and often wonderful, fuccess of the most ignorant quacks and impostors, both civil and religious, fufficiently demonstrate how eafily the multitude are imposed upon by the most extravagant and groundless pretensions. But when those pretentions are supposed by a very high degree of real and folid merit, when they are displayed with all the splendor which oftentation can bestow upon them, when they are fupported by high rank and great power, when they have often been successfully exerted, and are, upon that account, attended by the loud acclamations of the multitude; even the man of fober judgment often abandons himself to the general admiration. The very noise of those foolish acclamations often contributes to confound his understanding, and while he sees those great men only at a certain distance, he is often disposed to worship them with a fincere admiration, superior even to that with which they appear to worship themselves. When there is no envy in the case, we all take pleafure in admiring, and are, upon that account, naturally disposed, in our own fancies, to render complete and perfect in every respect the characters which, in many respects, are fo very worthy of admiration. The excessive felf-admiration of those great men is well underflood, parhaps, and even feen through, with fome degree of derision, by those wise men who are much in their familiarity, and who fecretly finile at those lofty pretensions, which, by people

at a distance, are often regarded with reverence, and almost with adoration. Such, however, have been, in all ages, the greater part of those men who have procured to themselves the most noisy fame, the most extensive reputation; a same and reputation, too, which have often descended to

the remotest posterity.

Great fuccess in the world, great authority over the fentiments and opinions of mankind; have very feldom been acquired without fome degree of this excessive self-admiration. The most splendid characters, the men who have performed the most illustrious actions, who have brought about the greatest revolutions, both in the situations and opinions of mankind; the most successful warriors, the greatest statesmen and legislators, the eloquent founders and leaders of the most numerous and most successful fects and parties; have many of them been, not more distinguished for their very great merit, than for a degree of prefumption and felf-admiration altogether disproportioned even to that very great merit. This prefumption was, perhaps, necessary, not only to prompt them to undertakings which a more fober mind would never have thought of, but to command the fubmission and obedience of their followers to support them in fuch undertakings. When crowned with fuccess, accordingly, this presumption has often betrayed them into a vanity that approached almost to infanity and folly. Alexander the Great appears, not only to have wished that other people should think him a God, but to have been at least

very well disposed to fancy himself such. Upon his death-bed, the most ungodlike of all situations, he requested of his friends that, to the respectable list of Deities, into which himself had long before been inferted, his old mother Olympia might likewise have the honor of being added. Amidft the respectful admiration of his followers and disciples amidst the universal applause of the public, after the oracle, which probably had followed the voice of that applause, had pronounced him the wifest of men, the great wisdom of Socrates, though it did not fuffer him to fancy himself a God, yet was not great enough to hinder him from fancying that he had fecret and frequent intimations from some invisible and divine Being. The found head of Cæsar was not so perfectly found as to hinder him from being much pleased with his divine genealogy from the goddess Venus; and, before the temple of his pretended great-grand-mother, to receive, without rifing from his feat, the Roman Senate, when that illustrious body came to prefent him with fome decrees conferring upon him the most extravagant honors. This insolence, joined to some other acts of an almost childish vanity, little to be expected from an understanding at once fo very acute and comprehensive, seems, by exasperating the public jealousy, to have emboldened his affassins, and to have hastened the execution of their conspiracy. The religion and manners of modern times give our great men little encouragement to fancy themselves either Gods or even Prophets. Success, however, joined to

great popular favor, has often fo far turned the heads of the greatest of them, as to make them ascribe to themselves both an importance and and an ability much beyond what they really possessed; and, by this presumption, to precipitate themselves into many rash and sometimes ruinous adventures. It is a characteristic almost peculiar to the great Duke of Marlborough, that ten years of fuch uninterrupted and fuch fplendid fuccess as scarce any other general could boaft of, never betrayed him into a fingle rash action, scarce into a fingle rash word or expresfion. The same temperate coolness and self-command cannot, I think, be ascribed to any other great warrior of later times; not to Prince Eugene, not to the late King of Prussia, not to the great Prince of Condé, not even to Gustavus Adolphus. Turenne feems to have approached the nearest to it; but several different transactions of his life fufficiently demonstrate that it was in him by no means so perfect as in the great Duke of Marlborough.

In the humble project of private life, as well as in the ambitious and proud pursuits of high stations, great abilities and successful enterprise, in the beginning, have frequently encouraged to undertakings which necessarily led to bankruptcy

and ruin in the end.

The esteem and admiration which every impartial spectator conceives for the real merit of those spirited, magnanimous, and high-minded persons, as it is a just and well-sounded sentiment,

fo it is a fleady and permanent one, and altogether independent of their good or bad fortune. It is otherwise with that admiration which he is apt to conceive for their excessive self-estimation and prefumption. While they are fuccessful, indeed, he is often perfectly conquered and overborne by them. Success covers from his eyes. not only the great imprudence, but frequently the great injuffice of their enterprises; and, far from blaming this defective part of their character, he often views it with the most enthusiastic admiration. When they are unfortunate, however, things change their colors and their names. What was before heroic magnanimity, refumes its proper appellation of extravagant rashness and folly; and the blackness of that avidity and injustice, which was before hid under the splendor of prosperity, comes full into view, and blots the whole lustre of their enterprise. Had Cæsar, instead of gaining, lost the battle of Pharfalia, his character would, at this hour, have ranked a little above that of Catiline, and the weakest man would have viewed his enterprise against the laws of his country in blacker colors, than, perhaps even Cato, with all the animofity of a party-man, ever viewed it at the His real merit, the justness of his taste, the fimplicity and elegance of his writings, the propriety of his eloquence, his skill in war, his resources in distress, his cool and sedate judgment in danger, his faithful attachment to his friends, his unexampled generofity to his enemies, would all

have been acknowledged; as the real merit of Catiline, who had many great qualities, is acknowledged at this day. But the infolence and injuffice of his all-grasping ambition would have darkened and extinguished the glory of all that real merit. Fortune has in this, as well as in some other respects already mentioned, great influence over the moral fentiments of mankind, and, according as she is either favorable or adverse, can render the same character the object, either of general love and admiration, or of universal hatred and contempt. This great disorder in our moral sentiments is by no means, however, without its utility; and we may on this, as well as on many other occasions, admire the wisdom of God even in the weakness and folly of man. Our admiration of fuccess is founded upon the same principle with our respect for wealth and greatness, and is equally necessary for establishing the distinction of ranks and the order of fociety. By this admiration of fuccess we are taught to submit more easily to those superiors, whom the course of human affairs may affign to us; to regard with reverence, and fometimes even with a fort of respectful affection, that fortunate violence which we are no longer capable of refifting; not only the violence of fuch splendid characters as those of a Cæsar or an Alexander, but often that of the most brutal and favage barbarians, of an Attila, a Gengis, or aTamerlane. To all fuch mighty conquerors the great mob of mankind are naturally disposed to look up with a wondering, though, no doubt, with a very weak and foolish admiration. By this admiration, however, they

are taught to acquiesce with less reluctance under that government which an irresistible force imposes upon them, and from which no reluctance could deliver them.

Though in prosperity, however, the man of exceffive felf-estimation may sometimes appear to have fome advantage over the man of correct and modest virtue; though the applause of the multitude, and of those who see them both only at a distance, is often much louder in favor of the one than it ever is in favor of the other; yet, all things fairly computed, the real balance of advantage is, perhaps in all cases, greatly in favor of the latter and against the former. The man who neither ascribes to himself, nor wishes that other people should ascribe to him, any other merit besides that which really belongs to him, fears no humiliation, dreads no detection; but rests contented and secure upon the genuine truth and folidity of his own character. His admirers may neither be very numerous nor very loud in their applauses; but the wifest man who fees him the nearest and who knows him the best, admires him the most. To a real wife man the judicious and well-weighed approbation of a fingle wife man, gives more heart-felt fatisfaction than all the noify applauses of ten thousand ignorant though enthusiastic admirers. He may say with Parmenides, who, upon reading a philosophical discourse before a public affembly at Athens, and observing, that, except Plato, the whole company had left him, continued, notwithstanding, to read on, and faid that Plato alone was audience fufficient for him.

Vol. II.

It is otherwife with the man of excessive selfestimation. The wife men who see him the nearest, admire him the leaft. Amidst the intoxication of prosperity, their sober and just esteem falls so far fhort of the extravagance of his own felf-admiration, that he regards it as mere malignity and envy. He suspects his best friends. Their company becomes offensive to him. He drives them from his prefence, and often rewards their fervices, not only with ingratitude, but with cruelty and injustice. He abandons his confidence to flatterers and traitors, who pretend to idolize his vanity and prefumption; and that character which in the beginning, though in some respects defective, was, upon the whole, both amiable and respectable, becomes contemptible and odious in the end. Amidst the intoxication of prosperity, Alexander killed Clytus, for having preferred the exploits of his father Philip to his own; put Calisthenes to death in torture, for having refused to adore him in the Persian manner; and murdered the great friend of his father, the venerable Parmenio, after having, upon the most groundless suspicions, sent first to the torture and afterwards to the scassold the only remaining fon of that old man, the rest having all before died in his own fervice. This was that Parmenio of whom Philip used to say, that the Athenians were very fortunate who could find ten generals every year, while he himself, in the whole course of his life, could never find one but Parmenio. It was upon the vigilance and attention of this Parmenio that he reposed at all times

with confidence and fecurity, and, in his hours of mirth and jollity, used to say, Let us drink, my friends, we may do it with safety, for Parmenio never drinks. It was this same Parmenio, with whose presence and counsel, it had been said, Alexander had gained all his victories; and without whose presence and counsel, he had never gained a single victory. The humble, admiring, and slattering friends, whom Alexander left in power and authority behind him, divided his empire among themselves, and after having thus robbed his family and kindred of their inheritance, put, one after another, every single surviving individual of them, whether male or semale, to death.

We frequently, not only pardon, but thoroughly enter into and sympathize with the excessive felf-estimation of those splendid characters in which we observe a great and distinguished superiority above the common level of mankind. We call them spirited, magnanimous, and high-minded; words which all involve in their meaning a confiderable degree of praise and admiration. But we cannot enter into and fympathize with the exceffive felf-estimation of those characters in which we can difcern no fuch diffinguished superiority. We are difgusted and revolted by it; and it is with fome difficulty that we can either pardon or fuffer it. We call it pride or vanity; two words, of which the latter always, and the former for the most part, involve in their meaning a considerable degree of blame.

Those two vices, however, though resembling, in some respects, as being both modifications of excessive self-estimation, are yet, in many respects,

very different from one another.

The proud man is fincere, and, in the bottom of his heart, is convinced of his own superiority; though it may fometimes be difficult to guess upon what that conviction is founded. He wishes you to view him in no other light than that in which, when he places himself in your situation, he really views himself. He demands no more of you than, what he thinks, justice. If you appear not to respect him as he respects himself, he is more offended than mortified, and feels the same indignant refentment as if he had fuffered a real injury. He does not even then, however, deign to explain the grounds of his own pretentions. He disdains to court your esteem. He affects even to despise it, and endeavours to maintain his assumed station, not so much by making you fensible of his superiority, as of your own meannels. He seems to wish, not so much to excite your esteem for himself, as to mortify that for yourself.

The vain man is not fincere, and, in the bottom of his heart, is very feldom convinced of that superiority which he wishes you to ascribe to him. He wishes you to view him in much more fplendid colors than those in which, when he places himself in your fituation, and supposes you to know all that he knows, he can really view himself. When you appear to view him, therefore, in different colors, perhaps in his proper colors, he

is much more mortified than offended. The grounds of his claim to that character which he wishes you to ascribe to him, he takes every opportunity of displaying, both by the most oftentatious and unnecessary exhibition of the good qualities and accomplishments which he possesses in some tolerable degree, and fometimes even by false pretensions to those which he either possesses in no degree, or in fo very flender a degree that he may well enough be faid to possels them in no degree. Far from despising your esteem, he courts it with the most anxious assiduity. Far from wishing to mortify your felf-estimation, he is happy to cherish it, in hopes that in return you will cherish his own. He flatters in order to be flattered. He studies to please, and endeavours to bribe you into a good opinion of him by politeness and complaifance, and fometimes even by real and effential good offices, though often displayed, perhaps, with unnecessary oftentation.

The vain man fees the respect which is paid to rank and fortune, and wishes to usurp this respect, as well as that for talents and virtues. His dress, his equipage, his way of living, accordingly, all announce both a higher rank and a greater actune than really belong to him; and in order to support this foolish imposition for a few years in the beginning of his life, he often reduces himself to poverty and distress long before the end of it. As long as he can continue his expense, however, his vanity is delighted with viewing himself, not in the light in which you would view him if you

knew all that he knows; but in that in which, he imagines, he has, by his own address, induced you actually to view him. Of all the illusions of vanity this is, perhaps, the most common. Obscure ftrangers who visit foreign countries, or who, from a remote province, come to vifit, for a fhort time, the capital of their own country, most frequently attempt to practife it. The folly of the attempt, though always very great and most unworthy of a man of fense, may not be altogether so great upon fuch as upon most other occasions. If their stay is short, they may escape any disgraceful detection; and after indulging their vanity for a few months or a few years, they may return to their own homes and repair, by future parfimony, the waste of their past profusion.

The proud man can very seldom be accused of this folly. His sense of his own dignity renders him careful to preserve his independency, and, when his fortune happens not to be large, though he wishes to be decent, he studies to be frugal and attentive in all his expenses. The oftentatious expense of the vain man is highly offensive to him. It outshines, perhaps, his own. It provokes his indignation as an insolent assumption of a rank which is by no means due; and he never talks of it without loading it with the harshest and severest

reproaches.

The proud man does not always feel himself at his ease in the company of his equals, and still less in that of his superiors. He cannot lay down his losty pretensions, and the countenance and

conversation of such company overawe him so much that he dares not display them. He has recourse to humbler company, for which he has little respect, which he would not willingly chuse, and which is by no means agreeable to him; that of his inferiors, his flatterers, and dependants. He seldom visits his superiors, or, if he does, it is rather to show that he is entitled to live in such company, than for any real satisfaction that he enjoys in it. It is as Lord Clarendon says of the Earl of Arundel, that he sometimes went to court, because he could there only find a greater man than himself; but that he went very seldom, because he found there a greater man than himself.

It is quite otherwise with the vain man. He courts the company of his fuperiors as much as the proud man shuns it. Their splendor, he seems to think, reflects a fplendor upon those who are much about them. He haunts the courts of kings and the levees of ministers, and gives himself the air of being a candidate for fortune and preferment, when in reality he possesses the much more precious happiness, if he knew how to enjoy it, of not being one. He is fond of being admitted to the tables of the great, and still more fond of magnifying to other people the familiarity with which he is honored there. He aflociates himself, as much as he can, with fashionable people, with those who are supposed to direct the public opinion, with the witty, with the learned, with the popular; and he shuns the company of his best friends whenever the

Notwithstanding all its groundless pretensions, however, vanity is almost always a sprightly and a gay, and very often a good-natured passion. Pride is always a grave, a fullen, and a fevere one. Even the falshoods of the vain man are all innocent falshoods, meant to raise himself, not to lower other people. To do the proud man justice, he very feldom stoops to the baseness of falshood. When he does, however, his falshoods are by no means so innocent. They are all mischievous, and meant to lower other people. He is full of indignation at the unjust superiority, as he thinks it, which is given to them. He views them with malignity and envy, and, in talking of them, often endeavours, as much as he can, to extenuate and lessen whatever are the grounds upon which their fuperiority is fupposed to be founded. Whatever tales are circulated to their disadvantage, though he seldom forges them himself, yet he often takes pleasure in believing them, is by no means unwilling to

repeat them, and even fometimes with fome degree of exaggeration. The worst falshcods of vanity are all what we call white lies: those of pride, whenever it condescends to falshood, are all of

the opposite complexion.

Our diflike to pride and vanity generally disposes us to rank the persons whom we accuse of those vices rather below than above the common level. In this judgment, however, I think, we are most frequently in the wrong, and that both the proud and the vain man are often (perhaps for the most part) a good deal above it; though not near fo much as either the one really thinks himself, or as the other wishes you to think him. If we compare them with their own pretenfions, they may appear the just objects of contempt. But when we compare them with what the greater part of their rivals and competitors really are, they may appear quite otherwise, and very much above the common level. Where there is this real fuperiority, pride is frequently attended with many respectable virtues; with truth, with integrity, with a high fense of honor, with cordial and steady friendship, with the most inflexible firmness and resolution. Vanity, with many amiable ones; with humanity, with politeness, with a desire to oblige in all little matters, and fometimes with a real generofity in great ones; a generofity, however, which it often wishes to display in the most splendid colors that it can. By their rivals and enemies, the French, in the laft century, were accused of vanity; the Spaniards,

of pride; and foreign nations were disposed to consider the one as the more amiable; the other, as the more respectable people.

The words vain and vanity are never taken in a good fense. We sometimes say of a man, when we are talking of him in good humor, that he is the better for his vanity, or that his vanity is more diverting than offensive; but we still consider it as a soible and a ridicule in his character.

The words proud and pride, on the contrary, are fometimes taken in a good fense. We frequently fay of a man, that he is too proud, or that he has too much noble pride, ever to fuffer himfelf to do a mean thing. Pride is, in this case, confounded with magnanimity. Aristotle, a philosopher who certainly knew the world, in drawing the character of the magnanimous man, paints him with many features which, in the two last centuries, were commonly ascribed to the Spanish character: that he was deliberate in all his resolutions; slow, and even tardy, in all his actions; that his voice was grave, his speech deliberate, his step and motion flow; that he appeared indolent and even flothful, not at all disposed to buftle about little matters, but to act with the most determined and vigorous refolution upon all-great and illustrious occasions; that he was not a lover of danger, or forward to expose himself to little dangers, but to great dangers; and that, when he exposed himself to danger, he was altogether regardless of his life.

The proud man is commonly too well contented with himself to think that his character requires any amendment. The man who seels himself all-persect, naturally enough despites all further improvement. His self-sufficiency and absurd conceit of his own superiority, commonly attend him from his youth to his most advanced age; and he dies, as Hamlet says, with all his fins upon his head, unanointed, unannealed.

It is frequently quite otherwise with the vain man. The defire of the efteem and admiration of other people, when for qualities and talents which are the natural and proper objects of effeem and admiration, is the real love of true glory; a passion which, if not the very best passion of human nature, is certainly one of the best. very frequently no more than an attempt prematurely to usurp that glory before it is due. Though your fon, under five-and-twenty years of age, fhould be but a coxcomb; do not, upon that account, despair of his becoming, before he is forty, a very wife and worthy man, and a real proficient in all those talents and virtues to which, at present, he may only be an oftentatious and empty pretender. The great fecret of education is to direct vanity to proper objects. Never suffer him to value himself upon trivial accomplishments. But do not always discourage his pretensions to those that are of real importance. He would not pretend to them if he did not earnestly defire to possess them. Encourage this desire; afford him every means to facilitate the acquisition; and do

not take too much offence, although he should sometimes assume the air of having attained it a little before the time.

Such, I fay, are the diffinguishing characteristics of pride and vanity, when each of them acts according to its proper character. But the proud man is often vain; and the vain man is often proud. Nothing can be more natural than that the man, who thinks much more highly of himself than he deferves, should wish that other people should think still more highly of him: or that the man, who wishes that other people should think more highly of him than he thinks of himself, should, at the same time, think much more highly of him-Those two vices being felf than he deferves. frequently blended in the same character, the characteristics of both are necessarily confounded; and we fometimes find the superficial and impertinent oftentation of vanity joined to the most malignant and derifive infolence of pride. We are fometimes, upon that account, at a loss how to rank a particular character, or whether to place it among the proud or among the vain.

Men of merit confiderably above the common level, fometimes under-rate as well as over-rate themselves. Such characters, though not very dignified, are often, in private society, far from being disagreeable. His companions all feel themselves much at their ease in the society of a man so perfectly modest and unassuming. If those companions, however, have not both more discernment and more generosity than ordinary, though

they may have some kindness for him, they have feldom much respect; and the warmth of their kindness is very seldom sufficient to compensate the coldness of their respect. Men of no more than ordinary difcernment never rate any person higher than he appears to rate himself. He seems doubtful himself, they say, whether he is perfectly fit for fuch a fituation or fuch an office; and immediately give the preference to some impudent blockhead who entertains no doubt about his own qualifications. Though they should have discernment, yet, if they want generofity, they never fail to take advantage of his simplicity, and to assume over him an impertinent superiority which they are by no means entitled to. His good-nature may enable him to bear this for some time; but he grows weary at last, and frequently when it is too late, and when that rank, which he ought to have affumed, is loft irrecoverably, and usurped. in consequence of his own backwardness, by fome of his more forward, though much less meritorious companions. A man of this character must have been very fortunate in the early choice of his companions, if, in going through the world, he meets always with fair justice, even from those whom, from his own past kindness, he might have some reason to consider as his best friends; and a youth, too unaffurning and too unambitious, is frequently followed by an infignificant, complaining, and discontented old age.

Those unfortunate persons whom nature has

formed a good deal below the common level. feem fometimes to rate themselves still more below it than they really are. This humility appears fometimes to fink them into idiotifm. Whoever has taken the trouble to examine idiots. with attention, will find that, in many of them, the faculties of the understanding are by no means weaker than in feveral other people, who, though acknowledged to be dull and flupid. are not, by any body, accounted idiots. Many idiots, with no more than ordinary education, have been taught to read, write, and account tolerably well. Many perfons, never accounted idiots, notwithstanding the most careful education, and notwithstanding that, in their advanced age, they have had spirit enough to attempt to learn what their early education had not taught them, have never been able to acquire, in any tolerable degree, any one of those three accomplishments. By an instinct of pride, however, they fet themselves upon a level with their equals in age and fituation; and, with courage and firmness, maintain their proper station among their companions. By an opposite instinct, the idiot feels himfelf below every company into which you can introduce him. Ill-usage, to which he is extremely liable, is capable of throwing him into the most violent fits of rage and fury. But no good usage, no kindness or indulgence, can ever raife him to converse with you as your equal. If you can bring him to converse with you at all, however, you will frequently find his answers

fufficiently pertinent, and even fenfible. But they are always stamped with a distinct consciousness of his own great inferiority. He feems to shrink and, as it were, to retire from your look and conversation, and to feel, when he places himfelf in your fituation, that, notwithstanding your apparent condescension, you cannot help considering him as immensely below you. Some idiots, perhaps the greater part, feem to be fo, chiefly or altogether, from a certain numbness or torpidity in the faculties of the understanding. But there are others, in whom those faculties do not appear more torpid or benumbed than in many other people who are not accounted idiots. But that instinct of pride, necessary to support them upon an equality with their brethren, feems totally wanting in the former and not in the latter.

That degree of felf-estimation, therefore, which contributes most to the happiness and contentment of the person himself, seems likewise most agreeable to the impartial spectator. The man who esteems himself as he ought, and no more than he ought, seldom fails to obtain from other people all the esteem that he himself thinks due. He desires no more than is due to him, and he rests

upon it with complete fatisfaction.

The proud and the vain man, on the contrary, are confiantly diffatisfied. The one is tormented with indignation at the unjust superiority, as he thinks it, of other people. The other is in continual dread of the shame which, he foresees, would attend upon the detection of his groundless pretensions.

Even the extravagant pretentions of the man of real magnanimity, though, when supported by splendid abilities and virtues, and, above all, by good fortune, they impose upon the multitude, whose applauses he little regards, do not impose upon those wise men whose approbation he can only value, and whose esteem he is most anxious to acquire. He feels that they see through, and suspects that they despise his excessive presumption; and he often suffers the cruel missortune of becoming, first the jealous and secret, and at last the open, surious, and vindictive enemy of those very perfons, whose friendship it would have given him the greatest happiness to enjoy with unsuspicious security.

Though our diflike to the proud and the vain often disposes us to rank them rather below than above their proper station, yet, unless we are provoked by some particular and personal impertinence, we very feldom venture to use them ill. In common cases, we endeavour, for our own ease, rather to acquiesce, and, as well as we can, to accommodate ourselves to their folly. But, to the man who under-rates himself, unless we have both more discernment and more generosity than belong to the greater part of men, we feldom fail to do, at least, all the injustice which he does to himself, and frequently a great deal more. He is not only more unhappy in his own feelings than either the proud or the vain, but he is much more liable to every fort of ill-ufage from other people. In almost all cases, it is better to be a little too proud,

proud, than, in any respect too humble; and, in the sentiment of self-estimation, some degree of excess seems, both to the person himself and to the impartial spectator, to be less disagreeable

than any degree of defect.

In this, therefore, as well as in every other emotion, passion, and habit, the degree that is most agreeable to the impartial spectator is likewise most agreeable to the person himself, and according as either the excess or the defect is least offensive to the former, so, either the one or the other is in proportion least disagreeable to the latter.

CONCLUSION of the SIXTH PART.

CONCERN for our own happiness recommends to us the virtue of prudence: concern for that of other people, the virtues of justice and beneficence; of which, the one restrains us from hurting, the other prompts us to promote that happiness. Independent of any regard either to what are, or to what ought to be, or to what upon a certain condition would be. the fentiments of other people, the first of those three virtues is originally recommended to us by our felfish, the other two by our benevolent affections. Regard to the sentiments of other people, however, comes afterwards both to enforce and to direct the practice of all those virtues; and no man during, either the whole course of his life, or that of any confiderable part of it, ever trod fleadily and uniformly in the paths of prudence, of VOL. II.

justice, or of proper beneficence, whose conduct was not principally directed by a regard to the fentiments of the supposed impartial spectator, of the great inmate of the breast, the great judge and arbiter of conduct. If in the course of the day we have fwerved in any respect from the rules which he prescribes to us; if we have either exceeded or relaxed in our frugality; if we have either exceeded or relaxed in our industry; if, through passion or inadvertency, we have hurt in any respect the interest or happiness of our neighbour; if we have neglected a plain and proper opportunity of promoting that interest and happiness; it is this inmate who, in the evening, calls us to an account for all those omissions and violations, and his reproaches often make us blush inwardly both for our folly and inattention to our own happiness. and for our still greater indifference and inattention, perhaps, to that of other people.

But though the virtues of prudence, justice, and beneficence, may, upon different occasions, be recommended to us almost aqually by two different principles; those of self-command are upon most occasions, principally and almost entirely recommended to us by one; by the sense of propriety, by regard to the sentiments of the supposed impartial spectator. Without the restraint which this principle imposes, every passion would, upon most occasions, rush headlong, if I may say so, to its own gratistation. Anger would follow the suggestions of its own fury; sear those of its own violent agitations. Regard to no time or place would induce

vanity to refrain from the loudest and most impertinent ostentation; or voluptuousness from the most open, indecent, and scandalous indulgence. Respect for what are, or for what ought to be, or for what upon a certain condition would be, the sentiments of other people, is the sole principle which, upon most occasions, overawes all those mutinous and turbulent passions into that tone and temper which the impartial spectator can

enter into and fympathize with.

Upon fome occasions, indeed, those passions are restrained, not so much by a sense of their impropriety, as by prudential confiderations of the bad consequences which might follow from their indulgence. In fuch cases, the passions, though reftrained, are not always subdued, but often remain lurking in the breaft with all their original fury. The man whose anger is restrained by fear, does not always lay afide his anger, but only referves its gratification for a more fale opportunity. But the man who, in relating to fome other person the injury which has been done to him, feels at once the fury of his passion cooled and becalmed by sympathy with the more moderate fentiments of his companion, who at once adopts those more moderate sentiments, and comes to view that injury, not in the black and atrocious colors in which he had originally beheld it, but in the much milder and fairer light in which his companion naturally views it; not only restrains, but in some measure subdues, his anger. The passion becomes really less than it was before, and less

revenge which at first, perhaps, he might have

thought of inflicting.

Those passions which are restrained by the sense of propriety, are all in some degree moderated and subdued by it. But those which are restrained only by prudential considerations of any kind, are, on the contrary, frequently inslamed by the restraint, and sometimes (long after the provocation given, and when nobody is thinking about it) burst out abruptly and unexpectedly, and with

tenfold fury and violence.

Anger, however, as well as every other passion. may, upon many occasions, be very properly restrained by prudential considerations. Some exertion of manhood and felf-command is even necessary for this fort of restraint; and the impartial spectator may sometimes view it with that fort of cold esteem due to that species of conduct which he confiders as a mere matter of vulgar prudence: but never with that affectionate admiration with which he furveys the fame passions, when, by the fense of propriety, they are moderated and subdued to what he himself can readily enter into. the former species of restraint, he may frequently discern some degree of propriety, and, if you will, even of virtue; but it is a propriety and virtue of a much inferior order to those which he always feels with transport and admiration in the latter.

The virtues of prudence, justice, and beneficence, have no tendency to produce any but the

most agreeable effects. Regard to those effects, as it originally recommends them to the actor, for does it afterwards to the impartial spectator. In our approbation of the character of the prudent. man, we feel, with peculiar complacency, the fecurity which he must enjoy while he walks under the safeguard of that sedate and deliberate. virtue. In our approbation of the character of the just man, we feel, with equal complacency. the fecurity which all those connected with him. whether in neighbourhood, fociety, or bufiness. must derive from his scrupulous anxiety never either to hurt or offend. In our approbation of the character of the beneficent man, we enter into the gratitude of all those who are within. the fphere of his good offices, and conceive with them the highest fense of his merit. In our approbation of all those virtues, our sense of theiragreeable effects, of their utility, either to the person who exercises them, or to some other persons, joins with our sense of their propriety, and constitutes always a considerable, frequently the greater part of that approbation.

But in our approbation of the virtues of felfcommand, complacency with their effects sometimes constitutes no part, and frequently but a small part, of that approbation. Those effects may sometimes be agreeable, and sometimes disagreeable; and though our approbation is no doubt stronger in the source case, it is by no means altogether destroyed in the latter. The most heroic valor may be employed indifferently in the cause either of justice or of injustice; and though it is no doubt much more loved and admired in the former case, it still appears a great and respectable quality even in the latter. In that, and in all the other virtues of self-command, the splendid and dazzling quality seems always to be the greatness and steadiness of the exertion, and the strong sense of propriety which is necessary in order to make and to maintain that exertion. The effects are too often but too little regarded.

6 NO 61

THEORY

OF

MORAL SENTIMENTS.



PART VII.

Of Systems of MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

Confisting of four Sections.

SECTION I.

Of the Questions which ought to be examined in a Theory of Moral Sentiments.

If we examine the most celebrated and remarkable of the different theories which have been given concerning the nature and origin of our moral sentiments, we shall find that almost all of them coincide with some part or other of that which I have been endeavouring to give an

account of; and that if every thing which has already been faid be fully confidered, we shall be at no loss to explain what was the view or aspect of nature which led each particular author to form his particular fystem. From some one or other of those principles which I have been endeavouring to unfold, every fystem of morality that ever had any reputation in the world has, perhaps, ultimately been derived. As they are all of them, in this respect, founded upon natural principles, they are all of them in some measure in the right. But as many of them are derived from a partial and imperfect view of nature, there are many of them too in some respects in the wrong.

In treating of the principles of morals there are two questions to be considered. First, wherein does virtue confist? Or what is the tone of temper, and tenor of conduct, which constitutes the excellent and praise-worthy character, the character which is the natural object of esteem. honor, and approbation? And, fecondly, by what power or faculty in the mind is it, that this character, whatever it be, is recommended to us? Or in other words, how and by what means does it come to pass, that the mind prefers one tenor of conduct to another, denominates the one right and the other wrong; confiders the one as the object of approbation, honor, and reward, and the other of blame, censure, and

punishment?

We examine the first question when we consider

whether virtue confiss in benevolence, as Dr. Hutcheson imagines; or in acting suitably to the different relations we stand in, as Dr. Clarke supposes; or in the wise and prudent pursuit of our own real and solid happiness, as has been the opinion of others.

We examine the second question, when we confider, whether the virtuous character, whatever it consists in, be recommended to us by self-love, which makes us perceive that this character, both in ourselves and others, tends most to promote our own private interest; or by reason, which points out to us the difference between one character and another, in the same manner as it does that between truth and salshood; or by a peculiar power of perception, called a moral sense, which this virtuous character gratises and pleases, as the contrary disgusts and displeases it; or last of all, by some other principle in human nature, such as a modification of sympathy, or the like.

I shall begin with considering the systems which have been formed concerning the first of these questions, and shall proceed afterwards to examine those concerning the second.

SECTION II.

Of the different Accounts which have been given of the Nature of Virtue.

INTRODUCTION.

THE different accounts which have been given of the nature of virtue, or of the temper of mind which conflitutes the excellent and praife-worthy character, may be reduced to three different classes. According to some, the virtuous temper of mind does not consist in any one species of affections but in the proper gevernment and direction of all our affections, which may be either virtuous or vicious according to the objects which they pursue, and the degree of vehemence with which they pursue them. According to these authors, therefore, virtue consists in propriety.

According to others, virtue confifts in the judicious pursuit of our own private interest and happiness, or in the proper government and direction of those selfish affections which aim solely at this end. In the opinion of these authors, there-

fore, virtue confists in prudence.

Another set of authors make virtue consist in those affections only which aim at the happiness of others, not in those which aim at our own. According to them, therefore, disinterested

benevolence is the only motive with can stamp

upon any action the character of virtue.

The character of virtue, it is evident, must either be ascribed indifferently to all our affections, when under proper government and direction; or it must be confined to some one class or divifion of them. The great division of our affections is into the felfish and the benevolent. If the character of virtue, therefore, cannot be ascribed indifferently to all our affections, when under proper government and direction, it must be confined either to those which aim directly at our own private happiness, or to those which aim directly at that of others. If virtue, therefore, does not confift in propriety, it must confist either in prudence or in benevolence. Besides these three, it is scarce possible to imagine that any other account can be given of the nature of virtue. I shall endeavour to show hereaster how all the other accounts, which are feemingly different from any of these, coincide at bottom with some one or other of them.

CHAP. I.

Of those Systems which make Virtue consist in Propriety.

A CCORDING to Plato, to Aristotle, and to Zeno, virtue consists in the propriety of conduct, or in the suitableness of the affection from which we act to the object which excites it.

I. In the fystem of Plato' the soul is considered as something like a little state or republic, composed of three different faculties or orders.

The first is the judging faculty, the faculty which determines not only, what are the proper means for attaining any end, but also what ends are fit to be pursued, and what degree of relative value we ought to put upon each. This faculty Plato called, as it is very properly called, reason, and considered it as what had a right to be the governing principle of the whole. Under this appellation, it is evident, he comprehended not only that faculty by which we judge of truth and falsehood, but that by which we judge of the propriety or impropriety of desires and affections.

The different passions and appetites, the natural subjects of this ruling principle, but which are so apt to rebel against their master, he reduced to two different classes or orders. The first consisted of those passions, which are sounded in pride and resentment, or in what the schoolmen called the

Sec Piato de R.p. l.b. iv.

irascible part of the soul; ambition, animosity, the love of honor, and the dread of shame, the desire of victory, superiority, and revenge; all those passions, in short, which are supposed either to rise from, or to denote what, by a metaphor in our language, we commonly call spirit or natural sire. The second consisted of those passions which are sounded in the love of pleasure, or in what the schoolmen called the concupiscible part of the soul. It comprehended all the appetites of the body, the love of ease and security, and of all sensual gratifications.

It rarely happens that we break in upon that plan of conduct, which the governing principle prescribes, and which in all our cool hours we had laid down to ourselves as what was most proper for us to purfue, but when prompted by one or other of those two different sets of passions: either by ungovernable ambition and refentment. or by the importunate folicitations of present ease and pleasure. But though these two orders of passions are so apt to mislead us, they are still confidered as necessary parts of human nature: the first having been given to defend us against injuries, to affert our rank and dignity in the world. to make us aim at what is noble and honorable. and to make us distinguish those who act in the fame manner; the fecond, to provide for the fupport and necessities of the body.

In the strength, acuteness, and perfection of the governing principle was placed the essential virtue of prudence, which, according to Plato, confisted in a just and clear discernment, sounded

upon general and scientific ideas, of the ends which were proper to be pursued, and of the means which were proper for attaining them.

When the first set of passions, those of the irascible part of the soul, had that degree of flrength and firmness, which enabled them, under the direction of reason, to despise all dangers in the purfuit of what was honorable and noble; it constituted the virtue of fortitude and magnanimity. This order of passions, according to this fystem, was of a more generous and noble nature than the other. They were confidered upon many occasions as the auxiliaries of reason, to check and restrain the inferior and brutal appetites. We are often angry at ourselves, it was observed, we often become the objects of our own refentment and indignation, when the love of pleasure prompts to do what we disapprove of; and the irascible part of our nature is in this manner called in to affift the rational against the concupifcible.

When all those three different parts of our nature were in perfect concord with one another, when neither the irascible nor concupiscible passions ever aimed at any gratification which reason did not approve of, and when reason never commanded any thing, but what these of their own accord were willing to perform: this happy composure, this perfect and complete harmony of soul, constituted that virtue which in their language is expressed by a word which we commonly translate temperance, but which might more properly be translated good temper, or sobriety and moderation of mind.

Justice, the last and greatest of the four cardinal virtues, took place, according to this system, when each of those three faculties of the mind confined itself to its proper office, without attempting to encroach upon that of any other; when reason directed and passion obeyed, and when each passion performed its proper duty, and exert d itself towards its proper object easily and without reluctance, and with that degree of force and energy, which was suitable to the value of what it pursued. In this consisted that complete virtue, that perfect propriety of conduct, which Plato, after some of the ancient Pythagoreans, denominated Justice.

The word, it is to be observed, which expresses justice in the Greek language, has several different meanings; and as the correspondent word in all other languages, fo far as I know, has the same, there must be some natural affinity among those various fignifications. In one sense we are faid to do justice to our neighbour when we abstain from doing him any positive harm, and do not directly hurt him, either in his person, or in his estate, or in his reputation. This is that justice which I have treated of above, the observance of which may be extorted by force, and the violation of which exposes to punishment. In another fense we are said not to do justice to our neighbour unless we conceive for him all that love, respect, and esteem, which his character, his fituation, and his connexion with ourselves, render fuitable and proper for us to feel, and unless we act accordingly. It is in this sense that

we are faid to do injustice to a man of merit who is connected with us, though we abstain from hurting him in every respect, if we do not exert ourselves to serve him and to place him in that fituation in which the impartial spectator would be pleased to see him. The first sense of the word coincides with what Aristotle and the Schoolmen call commutative justice, and with what Grotius calls the justitia expletrix, which confists in abstaining from what is another's, and in doing voluntarily whatever we can with propriety be forced to do. The fecond fense of the word coincides with what fome have called distributive justice', and with the justitia attributrix of Grotius, which confists in proper beneficence, in the becoming use of what is our own, and in the applying it to those purposes either of charity or generosity, to which it is most suitable, in our situation, that it should be applied. In this fense justice comprehends all the focial virtues. There is yet another fense in which the word justice is sometimes taken, still more extensive than either of the former, though very much a-kin to the last; and which runs too, so far as I know, through all languages. It is in this laft fense that we are said to be unjust, when we do not feem to value any particular object with that degree of esteem, or to pursue it with that degree

The distributive justice of Aristotle is somewhat different. It consists in the proper distribution of rewards from the public stock of a community. See Aristotle, Ethic. Nic. 1. 5. c. 2.

of ardor which to the impartial spectator it may appear to deferve or to be naturally fitted for exciting. Thus we are faid to do injustice to a poem or a picture; when we do not admire them enough, and we are faid to do them more than justice when we admire them too much. In the fame manner we are faid to do injuffice to ourselves when we appear not to give fufficient attention to any particular object of felf-interest. In this last fense, what is called justice means the same thing with exact and perfect propriety of conduct and behaviour, and comprehends in it, not only the offices of both commutative and distributive justice, but of every other virtue, of prudence, of fortitude, of temperance. It is in this last fense that Plato evidently understands what he calls justice: and which, therefore, according to him, comprehends in it the perfection of every fort of virtue.

Such is the account given by Plato of the nature of virtue, or of that temper of mind which is the proper object of praise and approbation. It confists, according to him, in that state of mind in which every faculty confines itself within its proper sphere without encroaching upon that of any other, and performs its proper office with that precise degree of strength and vigor which belongs to it. His account, it is evident, coincides in every respect with what we have said above concerning the propriety of conduct.

II. Virtue, according to Aristotle ', confists in

See Aristotle, Ethic. Nic.l. 2. c. 5. & feq. & l. 3. c. 5. & feq. Vol. II.

the habit of mediocrity according to right reason. Every particular virtue, according to him, lies in a kind of middle between two opposite vices, of which the one offends from being too much, the other from being too little affected by a particular species of objects. Thus the virtue of fortitude or courage lies in the middle between the opposite vices of cowardice and of presumptuous rashness, of which the one offends from being too much, and the other from being too little affected by the objects of fear. Thus too the virtue of frugality lies in a middle between avarice and profusion, of which the one consists in an excess, the other in a defect of the proper attention to the objects of felf-interest. Magnanimity, in the same manner, lies in a middle between the excess of arrogance and the defect of pufillanimity, of which the one confists in too extravagant, the other in too weak a fentiment of our own worth and dignity. It is unnecessary to observe that this account of virtue corresponds too pretty exactly with what has been faid above concerning the propriety and impropriety of conduct.

According to Aristotle, indeed, virtue did not so much consist in those moderate and right affections, as in the habit of this moderation. In order to understand this, it is to be observed, that virtue may be considered either as the quality of an action, or as the quality of a person. Considered as the quality on an action, it consists, even according to

^{*} See Aristotle , Ethic. Nic. lib. ii. ch. 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Aristotle, in the reasonable moderation of the affection from which the action proceeds, whether this disposition be habitual to the person or not. Considered as the quality of a person, it consists in the habit of this reasonable moderation, in its having become the customary and usual disposition of the mind. Thus the action which proceeds from an occasional fit of generosity is undoubtedly a generous action, but the man who performs it, is not necessarily a generous person, because it may be the fingle action of the kind which he ever performed. The motive and disposition of heart. from which this action was performed, may have been quite just and proper: but as this happy mood feems to have been the effect rather of accidental humor than of any thing fleady or permanent in the character, it can reflect no great honor on the performer. When we denominate a character generous or charitable, or virtuous in any respect, we mean to fignify that the disposition expressed by each of those appellations is the usual and customary disposition of the person. But fingle actions of any kind, how proper and fuitable foever, are of little consequence to show that this is the case. If a single action was sufficient to stamp the character of any virtue upon the person who performed it, the most worthless of mankind might lay claim to all the virtues; fince there is no man who has not, upon fome occasions, acted with prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude. But though fingle actions, how laudable foever, reflect very little praise upon the

person who persorms them, a single vicious action persormed by one whose conduct is usually very regular, greatly diminishes and sometimes destroys altogether our opinion of his virtue. A single action of this kind sufficiently shows that his habits are not persect, and that he is less to be depended upon, than, from the usual train of his behaviour,

we might have been apt to imagine.

Aristotle too', when he made virtue to confist in practical habits, had it probably in his view to oppose the doctrine of Plato, who feems to have been of opinion that just fentiments and reasonable judgments concerning what was fit to be done or to be avoided, were alone fufficient to constitute the most perfect virtue. Virtue, according to Plato, might be confidered as a species of science, and no man, he thought, could see clearly and demonstratively what was right and what was wrong, and not act accordingly. Paffion might make us act contrary to doubtful and uncertain opinions, not to plain and evident judgments. Aristotle, on the contrary, was of opinion, that no conviction of the understanding was capable of getting the better of inveterate habits, and that good morals arose not from knowledge but from action.

III. According to Zono', the founder of the

^{&#}x27; See Aristotle, Mag. Mor. lib. i. ch. 1.

See Cicero de finibus, lib. iii. also Diogenes Laertius in Zenone, lib. vii. segment 84.

Stoical doctrine, every animal was by nature recommended to its own care, and was endowed with the principle of felf-love, that it night endeavour to preferve, not only its existence, but all the different parts of its nature, in the best and most perfect state of which they were capable.

The felf-love of man embraced, if I may fay fo, his body and all its different members, his mind and all its different faculties and powers, and defired the prefervation and maintenance of them all in their best and most perfect condition. Whatever tended to support this state of existence was, therefore, by nature pointed out to him as fit to be chosen, and whatever tended to destroy it, as fit to be rejected. Thus health, agility and ease of body as well as the external conveniences which could promote these; wealth, power, honors; the respect and esteem of those we live with; were naturally pointed out to us as things eligible, and of which the possession was preferable to the want. On the other hand, fickness, infirmity, unwieldiness, pain of body, as well as all the external inconveniences which tend to occasion or bring on any of them; poverty, the want of authority, the contempt or hatred of those we live with; were, in the fame manner, pointed out to us as things to be shunned and avoided. In each of those two opposite classes of objects, there were fome which appeared to be more the objects either of choice or rejection, than others in the fame class. Thus, in the first class, health appeared evidently preferable to strength, and strength to

agility; reputation to power, and power to riches. And thus too, in the fecond class, fickness was more to be avoided than unwieldiness of body, ignominy than poverty, and poverty than the loss of power. Virtue and the propriety of conduct confisted in chusing and rejecting all different objects and circumstances according as they were by nature rendered more or less the objects of choice or rejection; in felecting always from among the feveral objects of choice prefented to us, that which was most to be chosen, when we could not obtain them all; and in felecting too, out of the several objects of rejection offered to us, that which was least to be avoided, when it was not in our power to avoid them all. By chusing and rejecting with this just and accurate discernment, by thus bestowing upon every object the precise degree of attention it deserved, according to the place which it held in this natural scale of things, we maintained, according to the Stoics, that perfect rectitude of conduct which constituted the essence of virtue. This was what they called to live confiftently, to live according to nature, and to obey those laws and directions which nature, or the Author of nature, had prescribed for our conduct.

So far the Stoical idea of propriety and virtue is not very different from that of Aristotle and the

ancient Peripatetics.

Among those primary objects which nature had recommended to us as eligible, was the prosperity of our family, of our relations, of our friends, of our country, of mankind, and of

the universe in general. Nature, too, had taught us, that as the prosperity of two was preferable to that of one, that of many, or of all, must be infinitely more fo. That we ourselves were but one, and that confequently wherever our profperity was inconfistent with that either of the whole, or of any confiderable part of the whole, it ought, even in our own choice, to yield to what was fo vaftly preferable. As all events in this world were conducted by the providence of a wife, powerful, and good God, we might be affured that whatever happened tended to the prosperity and perfection of the whole. If we ourselves, therefore, were in poverty, in sickness, or in any other calamity, we ought, first of all, to use our utmost endeavours, so far as justice and our duty to others would allow, to rescue ourselves from this disagreeable circumstance. But if after all we could do, we found this impossible, we ought to rest satisfied that the order and perfection of the universe required that we should in the mean time continue in this And as the prosperity of the whole should, even to us, appear preferable to so infignificant a part as ourselves, our situation whatever it was, ought from that moment to become the object of our liking, if we would maintain that complete propriety and rectitude of sentiment and conduct in which confifted the perfection of our nature. If, indeed, any opportunity of extricating ourselves should offer, it became our duty to embrace it. The order of the universe, it was

evident, no longer required our continuance in this fituation, and the great Director of the world plainly called upon us to leave it, by fo clearly pointing out the road which we were to follow. It was the same case with the adversity of our relations, our friends, our country. If, without violating any more facred obligation, it was in our power to prevent or put an end to their calamity, it undoubtedly was our duty to do fo. The propriety of action, the rule which Jupiter had given us for the direction of our conduct, evidently required this of us. But if it was altogether out of our power to do either, we ought then to confider this event as the most fortunate which could possibly have happened; because we might be assured that it tended most to the prosperity and order of the whole, which was what we ourfelves, if we were wife and equitable, ought most of all to desire. It was our own final interest considered as a part of that whole, of which the prosperity ought to be, not only the principal, but the fole object of our defire.

" In what sense," says Epictetus, " are some " things faid to be according to our nature, and " others contrary to it? It is in that fense in which " we confider ourselves as separated and detached " from all other things. For thus it may be faid " to be according to the nature of the foot " to be always clean. But if you confider " it as a foot, and not as something detached " from the rest of the body, it must behave " it fometimes to trample in the dirt, and " fometimes to tread upon thorns, and fometimes,

" too, to be cut off for the fake of the whole " body; and if it refuses this, it is no longer a " foot. Thus, too, ought we to conceive with " regard to ourselves. What are you? A man. " If you confider yourfelf as fomething separated " and detached, it is agreeable to your nature to live " to old age, to be rich, to be in health. But if " you consider yourself as a man, and as a part " of a whole, upon account of that whole, it will " behove you fometimes to be in fickness, some-" times to be exposed to the inconveniency of a " fea-voyage, fometimes to be in want; and at " last, perhaps, to die before your time. Why " then do you complain? Do not you know " that by doing fo, as the foot ceases to be a " foot, fo you cease to be a man?"

A wife man never complains of the deftiny of Providence, nor thinks the universe in confufion when he is out of order. He does not look upon himself as a whole, separated and detached from every other part of nature, to be taken care of by itself and for itself. He regards himself in the light in which he imagines the great genius of human nature, and of world, regards him. He enters, if I may fay fo, into the fentiments of that divine Being, and confiders himself as an atom, a particle, of an immense and infinite fystem, which must and ought to be disposed of, according to the conveniency of the whole. Affured of the wisdom which directs all the events of human life, whatever lot befals him, he accepts it with joy, fatisfied that, if he had known all the

connexions and dependencies of the different parts of the universe, it is the very lot which he himself would have wished for. If it is life, he is contented to live; and if it is death, as nature must have no further occasion for his presence here, he willingly goes where he is appointed. I accept, faid a cynical philosopher, whose doctrines were in this respect the same as those of the Stoics, I accept, with equal joy and fatisfaction, whatever fortune can befal me. Riches or poverty, pleasure or pain, health or fickness, all is alike: nor would I defire that the Gods should in any respect change my destination. If I was to ask of them any thing beyond what their bounty has already bestowed, it should be that they would inform me before-hand what it was their pleafure should be done with me, that I might of my own accord place myself in this situation, and demonftrate the cheerfulness with which I embraced their allotment. If I am going to fail, fays Epictetus, I chuse the best ship and the best pilot, and I wait for the fairest weather that my circumstances and duty will allow. Prudence and propriety, the principles which the Gods have given me for the direction of my conduct, require this of me; but they require no more: and if, notwithstanding, a storm arises, which neither the strength of the vessel nor the skill of the pilot are likely to withstand, I give myself no trouble about the consequence. All that I had to do is done already. The directors of my conduct never command me to be miserable, to be anxious,

desponding, or asraid. Whether we are to be drowned, or to come to a harbour, is the business of Jupiter, not mine. I leave it entirely to his determination, nor ever break my rest with considering which way he is likely to decide it, but receive whatever comes with equal indifference and security.

From this perfect confidence in that benevolent wifdom which governs the universe, and from this entire refignation to whatever order that wifdom might think proper to establish, it necessarily followed, that, to the Stoical wife man, all the events of human life must be in a great measure indifferent. His happiness consisted altogether, first, in the contemplation of the happiness and perfection of the great fystem of the universe, of the good government of the great republic of Gods and men, of all rational and fensible beings; and, fecondly, in discharging his duty, in acting properly in the affairs of this great republic whatever little part that wisdom had assigned to him. The propriety or impropriety of his endeavours might be of great consequence to him. Their fuccess or disappointment could be of none at all; could excite no passionate joy or forrow, no passionate desire or aversion. If he preferred some events to others, if some situations were the objects of his choice and others of his rejection, it was not because he regarded the one as in themfelves in any respect better than the other, or thought that his own happiness would be more complete in what is called the fortunate than in what is regarded as the diffresful fituation; but

because the propriety of action, the rule which the Gods had given him for the direction of his conduct, required him to chuse and reject in this manner. All his affections were absorbed and swallowed up in two great affections; in that for the difcharge of his own duty, and in that for the greatest possible happiness of all rational and sensible beings. For the gratification of this latter affection, he rested with the most perfect security upon the wisdom and power of the great Superintendant of the universe. His fole anxiety was about the gratification of the former; not about the event, but about the propriety of his own endeavours. Whatever the event might be, he trusted to a superior power and wisdom for turning it to promote that great end which he himself was most desirous of promoting.

This propriety of chusing and rejecting, though originally pointed out to us, and as it were recommended and introduced to our acquaintance by the things, and for the sake of the things, chosen and rejected; yet when we had once become thoroughly acquainted with it, the order, the grace, the beauty which we discerned in this conduct, the happiness which we felt resulted from it, necessarily appeared to us of much greater value than the actual obtaining of all the different objects of choice, or the actual avoiding of all those of rejection. From the observation of this propriety arose the happiness and the glory; from the neglect of it, the misery and the disgrace of

human nature.

But to a wife man, to one whose passions were brought under perfect subjection to the ruling principles of his nature, the exact observation of this propriety was equally eafy upon all occasions. Was he in propriety, he returned thanks to Jupiter for having joined him with circumstances which were eafily maftered, and in which there was little temptation to do wrong. Was he in adversity. he equally returned thanks to the director of this fpectacle of human life, for having opposed to him a vigorous athlete, over whom, though the contest was likely to be more violent, the victory was more glorious, and equally certain. Can there be any shame in that distress which is brought upon us without any fault of our own, and in which we behave with perfect propriety? There can, therefore, be no evil, but, on the contrary, the greatest good and advantage. A brave man exults in those dangers in which, from no rashness of his own, his fortune has involved him, They afford an opportunity of exercifing that heroic intrepidity, whose exertion gives the exalted delight which flows from the consciousness of superior propriety and deferved admiration. One who is master of all his exercises has no aversion to meafure his strength and activity with the strongest. And, in the fame manner, one who is mafter of all his passions, does not dread any circumstance in which the Surperintendant of the universe may think proper to place him. The bounty of that divine Being has provided him with virtues which render him superior to every situation.

If it is pleasure, he has temperance to refrain from it; if it is pain, he has constancy to bear it; if it is danger or death, he has magnanimity and fortitude to despise it. The events of human life can never find him unprepared, or at a loss how to maintain that propriety of sentiment and conduct which, in his own apprehension, constitutes at

once his glory and his happiness.

Human life, the Stoics appear to have confidered as a game of great skill; in which, however, there was a mixture of chance, or of what is vulgarly understood to be chance. In such games the stake is commonly a trifle, and the whole pleasure of the game arises from playing well, from playing fairly, and playing skilfully. If notwithstanding all his skill, however, the good player should, by the influence of chance, happen to lofe, the loss ought to be a matter, rather of merriment. than of ferious forrow. He has made no false stroke: he has done nothing which he ought to be ashamed of; he has enjoyed completely the whole pleasure of the game. If, on the contrary, the bad player, notwithstanding all his blunders, should, in the same manner, happen to win, his success can give him but little satisfaction. He is mortified by the remembrance of all the faults which he committed. Even during the play he can enjoy no part of the pleasure which it is capable of affording. From ignorance of the rules of the game, fear and doubt and hefitation are the disagreeable fentiments that precede almost every stroke which

he plays; and when he has played it, the mortification of finding it a gross plunder, commonly completes the unpleasing circle of his sensations. Human life, with all the advantages which can possibly attend it, ought, according to the Stoics, to be regarded but as a mere two-penny stake; a matter by far too infignificant to merit any anxious concern. Our only anxious concern dught to be, not about the stake, but about the proper method of playing. If we placed our happiness in winning the stake, we placed it in what depended upon causes beyond our power, and out of our direction. We necessarily exposed ourselves to perpetual fear and uneafiness, and frequently to grievous and mortifying disappointments. If we placed it in playing well, in playing fairly, in playing wifely and skilfully; in the propriety of our own conduct in short; we placed it in what, by proper discipline, education, and attention, might be altogether in our own power, and under our own direction. Our happiness was perfectly fecure, and beyond the reach of fortune. The event of our actions, if it was out of our power, was equally out of our concern, and we could never feel either fear or anxiety about it; nor ever fuffer any grievous, or even any ferious disappointment.

Human life itself, as well as every different advantage or disadvantage which can attend it, might, they said, according to different circumstances, be the proper object either of our choice or of our rejection. If, in our actual situation, there were more

circumflances agreeable to nature than contrary to it; more circumstances which were the objects of choice than of rejection; life, in this cafe, was upon the whole, the proper object of choice, and the propriety of conduct required that we should remain in it. If, on the other hand, there were, in our actual fituation, without any probable hope of amendment, more circumstances contrary to nature than agreeable to it; more circumstances which were the objects of rejection than of choice; life itself, in this case, became, to a wife man, the object of rejection, and he was not only at liberty to remove out of it, but the propriety of conduct, the rule which the Gods had given him for the direction of his conduct, required him to do fo. I am ordered, fays Epicletus, not to dwell at Nicopolis. I do not dwell there. I am ordered not to dwell at Athens. I do not dwell at Athens. I am ordered not to dwell in Rome. I do not dwell in Rome. I am ordered to dwell in the little and rocky island of Gyaræ. I go and dwelt there. But the house smokes in Gyaræ. If the smoke is moderate, I will bear it, and stay there. If it is excessive, I will go to a house from whence no tyrant can remove me. I keep in mind always that the door is open, that I can walk out when I please, and retire to that hospitable house which is at all times open to all the world; for beyond my undermost garment, beyond my body, no man living has any power over me. If your fituation is upon the whole difagreeable; if your house smokes too much for you, said the

the Stoics, walk forth by all means. But walk forth without repining; without murmuring or complaining. Walk forth calm, contented, rejoicing, returning thanks to the Gods, who, from their infinite bounty, have opened the fafe and quiet harbour of death, at all times ready to receive us from the stormy ocean of human life; who have prepared this facred, this inviolable, this great afylum, always open, always accessible; altogether beyond the reach of human rage and injuffice; and large enough to contain both all those who wish. and all those who do not wish to retire to it: an afylum which takes away from every man every pretence of complaining, or even of fancying that there can be any evil in human life, except fuch as he may fuffer from his own folly and weaknef.

The Stoics, in the few fragments of their philosophy which have come down to us, sometimes talk of leaving life with a gaiety, and even with a levity, which, were we to confider those passages by themselves, might induce us to believe that they imagine we could with propriety leave it whenever we had a mind, wantonly and capricioufly, upon the flightest disgust or unchiness. "When you fup with fuch a person," says Epictetus, "you complain of the long stories " which he tells you about his Mysian wars. " Now my friend, fays he, having told you " how I took possession of an eminence at such " a place, I will tell you how I was befieged in " fuch another place. But if you have a mind " not to be troubled with his long stories, do VOL. II.

" not accept of his supper. If you accept of his " fupper, you have not the least pretence to " complain of his long stories. It is the same " case with what you call the evils of human " life. Never complain of that of which it is at " all times in your power to rid yourfelf." Notwithstanding this gaiety and even levity of expression, however, the alternative of leaving life, or of remaining in it, was, according to the Stoics, a matter of the most serious and important deliberation. We ought never to leave it till we were diffinctly called upon to do fo by that fuperintending power which had originally placed us in it. But we were to confider ourfelves as called upon to do fo, not merely at the appointed and unavoidable term of human life. Whenever the providence of that superintending Power had rendered our condition in life upon the whole the proper object rather of rejection than of choice; the great rule which he had given us for the direction of our conduct, then required us to leave it. We might then be faid to hear the awful and benevolent voice of that divine being diftinctly calling upon us to do fo.

It was upon this account that, according to the Stoics, it might be the duty of a wife man to remove out of life, though he was perfectly happy; while, on the contrary, it might be the duty of a weak man to remain in it, though he was necessarily miserable. If, in the fituation of the wise man, there were more circumstances which were the natural objects of rejection than of choice, the whole fituation became the object of rejection, and the rule which the Gods had given him for the direction of his conduct, required that he should remove out of it as speedily as particular circumstances might render convenient. He was, however, perfectly happy even during the time that he might think proper to remain in it. He had placed his happiness, not in obtaining the objects of his choice, or in avoiding those of his rejection; but in always chusing and rejecting with exact propriety; not in the fuccess, but in the fitness of his endeavours and exertions. If, in the fituation of the weak man, on the contrary, there were more circumstances which were the natural objects of choice than of rejection; his whole fituation became the proper object of choice, and it was his duty to remain in it. He was unhappy, however, from not knowing how to use those circumstances. Let his cards be ever so good, he did not know how to play them, and could enjoy no fort of real fatisfaction, either in the progress, or in the event of the game, in whatever manner it might happen to turn out?.

The propriety, upon some occasions, of voluntary death, though it was, perhaps, more insisted upon by the Stoics, than by any other sect of ancient philosophers, was, however, a doctrine common to them all, even to the peaceable and indolent Epicureans. During the age in which flourished the founders of all the principal

^{&#}x27; See Cicero de finibus, lib. 3. c. 13. Olivet's edition.

M 2

fects of ancient philosophy; during the Peloponnesian war and for many years after its conclusion, all the different republics of Greece, were, at home, almost always distracted by the most furious factions; and abroad, involved in the most fanguinary wars, in which each fought, not merely superiority or dominion, but either completely to extirpate all its enemies, or, what was not less cruel, to reduce them into the vilest of all states, that of domestic slavery, and to sell them, man, woman, and child, like fo many herds of cattle, to the highest bidder in the market. The smallest of the greater part of those states, too, rendered it, to each of them, no very improbable event, that it might itself fall into that very calamity which it had fo frequently, either, perhaps, actually inflicted, or at least attempted to inflict upon some of its neighbours. In this disorderly state of things, the most perfect innocence, joined to both the highest rank and the greatest public services, could give no security to any man that, even at home and among his own relations and fellow-citizens, he was not, at fome time or another, from the prevalence of some hostile and furious faction, to be condemned to the most cruel and ignominious punishment, If he was taken prisoner in war, or if the city of which he was a member was conquered, he was exposed, if possible, to still greater injuries and infults. But every man naturally, or rather necessarily, familiarizes his imagination with the distresses to which he foresees that his situation

may frequently expose him. It is impossible that a failor should not frequently think of storms and shipwrecks, and foundering at sea, and of how he himself is likely both to feel and to act upon fuch occasions. It was impossible, in the same manner, that a Grecian patriot or hero should not familiarize his imagination with all the different calamities to which he was fenfible his fituation must frequently, or rather constantly expose him. As an American favage prepares his deathfong, and confiders how he should act when he has fallen into the hands of his enemies, and is by them put to death in the most lingering tortures, and amidst the insults and derision of all the spectators; so a Grecian patriot or hero could not avoid frequently employing his thoughts in confidering what he ought both to fuffer and to do in banishment, in captivity, when reduced to flavery, when put to the torture, when brought to the scaffold. But the philosophers of all the different fects very justly represented virtue; that is wife, just, firm, and temperate conduct; not only as the most probable, but as the certain and infallible road to happiness even in this life. This conduct, however, could not always exempt, and might even fometimes expose the person who followed it to all the calamities which were incident to that unfettled fituation of public affairs. They endeavoured, therefore, to show that happiness was either altogether, or at least in a great measure, independent of fortune; the Stoics, that it was so altogether; the

M 3

Academic and Peripatetic philosophers, that it was fo in a great measure. Wise, prudent, and good conduct was, in the first place, the conduct most likely to ensure success in every species of undertaking; and fecondly, though it should fail of fuccess, yet the mind was not left without consolation. The virtuous man might still enjoy the complete approbation of his own breaft; and might fill feel that, how untoward foever things might be without, all was calm and peace and concord within. He might generally comfort himfelf, too, with the affurance that he possessed the love and esteem of every intelligent and impartial fpectator, who could not fail both to admire his

conduct, and to regret his misfortune.

Those philosophers endeavoured, at the same time, to show, that the greatest misfortunes to which human life was liable, might be supported more easily than was commonly imagined. They endeavoured to point out the comforts which a man might still enjoy when reduced to poverty, when driven into banishment, when exposed to the injuffice of popular clamor, when laboring under blindness, under deafness, in the extremity of old age, upon the approach of death. pointed out, too, the confiderations which might contribute to support his constancy under the agonies of pain and even of torture, in fickness, in forrow for the loss of children, for the death of friends and relations, &c. The few fragments which have come down to us of what the ancient philosophers had written upon these subjects,

form, perhaps, one of the most instructive, as well as one of the most interesting remains of antiquity. The spirit and manhood of their doctrines make a wonderful contrast with the desponding, plaintive, and whining tone of some modern systems.

But while those ancient philosophers endeavoured in this manner to fuggest every consideration which could, as Milton fays, arm the obdured breast with stubborn patience, as with triple steel; they, at the same time, labored above all to convince their followers that there neither was nor could be any evil in death; and that, if their situation became at any time too hard for their constancy to support, the remedy was at hand, the door was open, and they might, without fear, walk out when they pleafed. If there was no world beyond the prefent, death, they faid, could be no evil; and if there was another world, the Gods must likewise be in that other, and a just man could fear no evil while under their protection. Those philofophers, in short, prepared a death-fong, if I may fay fo, which the Grecian patriots and heroes might make use of upon the proper occasions; and, of all the different sects, the Stoics, I think it must be acknowledged, had prepared by far the most animated and spirited song.

Suicide, however, never seems, to have been very common among the Greeks. Excepting Cleomenes, I cannot at present recollect any very illustrious either patriot or hero of Greece, who

died by his own hand. The death of Aristomenes is as much beyond the period of true history as that of Ajax. The common flory of the death of Themistocles, though within that period, bears upon its face all the marks of a most romantic fable. Of all the Greek heroes whose lives have been written by Plutarch, Cleomenes appears to have been the only one who perished in this manner. Theramines, Socrates, and Phocion, who certainly did not want courage, suffered themselves to be fent to prison, and submitted patiently to that death to which the injuffice of their fellow-citizens had condemmed them. The brave Eumenes allowed himself to be delivered up, by his own mutinous foldiers, to his enemy Antigonus, and starved to death, without attempting any violence. The gallant Philopæmen suffered himself to be taken prisoner by the Messenians, was thrown into a dungeon, and was supposed to have been privately poisoned. Several of the philosophers, indeed, are faid to have died in this manner; but their lives have been fo very foolishly written, that very little credit is due to the greater part of the talents which are told of them. Three different accounts have been given of the death of Zeno the Stoic. One is, that after enjoying, for ninety-eight years the most perfect state of health, he happened, in going out of his school, to fall; and though he fuffered no other damage than that of breaking or diflocating one of his fingers, he struck the ground with his hand, and, in the words of the Niobe of Euripides, faid, I come, why

doest thou call me? and immediately went home and hanged himself. At that great age, one should think, he might have had a little more patience. Another account is, that, at the same age, and in consequence of a like accident, he starved himfelf to death. The third account is, that, at feventy-two years of age, he died in the natural way; by far the most probable account of the three, and supported too by the authority of a cotemporary, who must have had every opportunity of being well informed; of Perfæus, originally the flave, and afterwards the friend and disciple of Zeno. The first account is given by Apollonius of Tyre, who flourished about the time of Augustus Cæsar, between two and three hundred years after the death of Zeno. I know not who is the author of the second account. Apollonius, who was himself a Stoic, had probably thought it would do honor to the founder of a fect which talked fo much about voluntary death, to die in this manner by his own hand. Men of letters, though, after their death, they are frequently more talked of than the greatest princes or statesmen of their times, are generally, during their life, so obscure and infignificant that their adventures are feldom recorded by cotemporary historians. Those of after-ages, in order to fatisfy the public curiofity, and having no authentic documents either to support or to contradict their narratives, seem frequently to have fashioned them according to their own fancy; and almost always with a great mixture of the

marvellous. In this particular case the marvellous, though supported by no authority, seems to have prevailed over the probable, though supported by the best. Diogenes Laertius plainly gives the preference to the story of Apollonius. Lucian and Lactantius appear both to have given credit to that

of the great age and of the violent death.

This fashion of voluntary death appears to have been much more prevalent among the proud Romans, than it ever was among the lively, ingenious, and accommodating Greeks. Even among the Romans, the fashion seems not to have been established in the early and, what are called, the virtuous ages of the republic. The common story of the death of Regulus, though probably a fable, .could never have been invented, had it been supposed that any dishonor could fall upon that hero, from patiently submitting to the tortures which the Carthaginians are faid to have inflicted upon him. In the later ages of the republic fome dishonor, I apprehend, would have attended this fubmission. In the different civil wars which preceded the fall of the commonwealth, many of the eminent men of all the contending parties chose rather to perish by their own hands, than to fall into those of their enemies. The death of Cato, celebrated by Cicero, and cenfured by Cæsar, and become the subject of a very serious controversy between, perhaps, the two most illustrious advocates that the world had ever beheld. flamped a character of splendor upon this method of dying which it feems to have retained for

feveral ages after. The eloquence of Cicero was fuperior to that of Cæfar. The admiring prevailed greatly over the cenfuring party, and the lovers of liberty, for many ages afterwards, looked up to Cato as to the most venerable martyr of the republican party. The head of a party, the Cardinal de Retz observes, may do what he pleases; as long as he retains the confidence of his own friends. he can never do wrong; a maxim of which his Eminence had himself, upon several occasions, an opportunity of experiencing the truth. Cato, it feems, joined to his other virtues that of an excellent bottle-companion. His enemies accused him of drunkenness, but, says Seneca, whoever objected this vice to Cato, will find it much easier to prove that drunkenness is a virtue, than that Cato could be addicted to any vice.

Under the Emperors this method of dying seems to have been, for a long time, perfectly fashionable. In the epistles of Pliny we find an account of several persons who chose to die in this manner, rather from vanity and oftentation, it would seem, than from what would appear, even to a sober and judicious Stoic, any proper or necessary reason. Even the ladies, who are seldom behind in following the sashion, seem frequently to have chosen, most unnecessarily, to die in this manner; and, like the ladies in Bengal, to accompany, upon some occasions, their husbands to the tomb. The prevalence of this sashion certainly occasioned many deaths which would not otherwise have happened. All the havoc, however, which

this, perhaps the highest exertion of human vanity and impertinence, could occasion, would,

probably, at no time, be very great.

The principle of fuicide, the principle which would teach us, upon some occasions, to consider that violent action as an object of applause and approbation, feems to be altogether a refinement of philosophy. Nature, in her found and healthful state, seems never to prompt us to suicide. There is, indeed, a species of melancholy (a difease to which human nature, among its other calamities, is unhappily subject) which feems to be accompanied with, what one may call, an irrefistible appetite for self - destruction. In circumstances often of the highest external prosperity, and sometimes too, in spite even of the most ferious and deeply impressed fentiments of religion, this disease has frequently been known to drive its wretched victims to this fatal extremity. The unfortunate persons who perish in this miserable manner, are the proper objects, not of censure, but of commiseration. To attempt to punish them, when they are beyond the reach of human punishment, is not more absurd than it is unjust. That punishment can fall only on their furviving friends and relations, who are always perfeetly innocent, and to whom the loss of their friend, in this difgraceful manner, must always be alone a very heavy calamity. Nature, in her found and healthful state, prompts us to avoid distress upon all occasions; upon many occasions to defend ourselves against it, though at the hazard, or

even with the certainty of perishing in that defence. But, when we have neither been able to defend ourselves from it, nor have perished in that defence. no natural principle, no regard to the approbation of the supposed impartial spectator, to the judgment of the man within the breaft, feems to call upon us to escape from it by destroying ourselves. It is only the consciousness of our own weakness, of our own incapacity to support the calamity with proper manhood and firmness, which can drive us to this resolution. I do not remember to have either read or heard of any American favage, who, upon being taken prisoner by some hostile tribe, put himself to death, in order to avoid being afterwards put to death in torture, and amidst the insults and mockery of his enemies. He places his glory in supporting those torments with manhood, and in retorting those infults with tenfold contempt and derision.

This contempt of life and death, however, and, at the same time, the most entire submission to the order of Providence; the most complete contentment with every event which the current of human affairs could possibly cast up, may be considered as the two sundamental doctrines upon which rested the whole sabric of Stoical morality. The independent and spirited, but often harsh Epictetus, may be considered as the great apostle of the first of those doctrines: the mild, the humane, the benevolent Antoninus, of the second.

The emancipated flave of Epaphriditus, who, in his youth, had been subjected to the insolence

of a brutal mafter, who, in his riper years, was, by the jealousy and caprice of Domitian, banished from Rome and Athens, and obliged to dwell at Nicopolis, and who, by the fame tyrant, might expect every moment to be fent to Gyaræ, or, perhaps, to be put to death; could preferve his tranquillity only by fostering in his mind the most fovereign contempt of human life. He never exults fo much, acordingly; his eloquence is never fo animated as when he represents the futility and nothingness of all its pleasures and all its pains.

The good-natured Emperor, the absolute sovereign of the whole civilized part of the world, who certainly had no peculiar reason to complain of his own allotment, delights in expressing his contentment with the ordinary course of things, and in pointing out beauties even in those parts of it where vulgar observers are not apt to see any. There is a propriety and even an engaging grace, he observes, in old age as well as in youth; and the weakness and decrepitude of the one state are as fuitable to nature as the bloom and vigor of the other. Death, too, is just as proper a termination of old age, as youth is of childhood, or manhood of youth. As we frequently fay, he remarks upon another occasion, that the physician has ordered to fuch a man to ride on horseback. or to use the cold bath, or to walk barefooted; so ought we to fay, that Nature, the great conductor and physician of the universe, has ordered to fuch a man a disease, or the amputation

of a limb, or the loss of a child. By the prescriptions of ordinary physicians the patient fwallows many a bitter potion; undergoes many a painful operation. From the very uncertain hope, however, that health may be the confequence, he gladly submits to all. The harshest prescriptions of the great Physician of nature, the patient may, in the fame manner, hope will contribute to his own health, to his own final prosperity and happiness: and he may be perfectly assured that they not only contribute, but are indispensably necessary to the health, to the profperity and happiness of the universe, to the furtherance and advancement of the great plan of Jupiter. Had they not been fo, the universe would never have produced them; its all-wife Architect and Conductor would never have fuffered them to happen. As all, even the smallest of the co-existent parts of the universe, are exactly fitted to one another, and all contribute to compose one immense and connected system; so all, even apparently the most infignificant of the fuccesfive events which follow one another, make parts, and necessary parts, of that great chain of causes and effects which had no beginning, and which will have no end; and which, as they all necesfarily refult from the original arrangement and contrivance of the whole; fo they are all effentially necessary, not only to its prosperity, but to its continuance and preservation. Whoever does not cordially embrace whatever befals him, whoever is forry that it has befallen him, whoever

wishes that it had not befallen him, wishes, so far as in him lies, to stop the motion of the universe, to break that great chain of fuccession, by the progress of which that system can alone be continued and preferved, and, for some little conveniency of his own, to diforder and difcompose the whole machine of the world. " O world," fays he, in another place, " all things are fuit-" able to me which are fuitable to thee. Nothing " is too early or too late to me which is feafon-" able for thee. All is fruit to me which thy feafons " bring forth. From thee are all things; in thee are " all things; for thee are all things. One man fays, " O beloved city of Cecrops. Wilt not thou fay, " O beloved city of God?"

From these very sublime doctrines the Stoics, or at least some of the Stoics, attempted to deduce

all their paradoxes.

The Stoical wife man endeavoured to enter into the views of the great Superintendant of the universe, and to see things in the same light in which that divine Being beheld them. But, to the great Superintendant of the universe, all the different events which the course of his providence may bring forth, what to us appear the smallest and the greatest, the bursting of a bubble, as Mr. Pope says, and that of a world, for example, were perfectly equal, were equally parts of that great chain which he had predestined from all eternity, were equally the effects of the same unerring wisdom, of the same universal and boundless benevolence. To the Stoical wise man, in the

fame manner, all those different events were perfeetly equal. In the course of those events, indeed, a little department, in which he had himself fome little management and direction, had been affigned to him. In this department he endeavoured to act as properly as he could, and to conduct himself according to those orders which. he understood, had been prescribed to him. But he took no anxious or passionate concern either in the fuccess, or in the disappointment of his own most faithful endeavours. The highest prosperity and the total destruction of that little department, of that little fystem which had been in some measure committed to his charge, were perfectly indifferent to him. If those events had depended upon him, he would have chosen the one, and he would have rejected the other. But as they did not depend upon him, he trufted to a fuperior wisdom, and was perfectly fatisfied that the event which happened, whatever it might be, was the very event which he himfelf, had he known all the connexions and dependencies of things, would most earnestly and devoutly have wished for. Whatever he did under the influence and direction of those principles was equally perfect; and when he stretched out his finger, to give the example which they commonly made use of, he performed an action in every respect as meritorious, as worthy of praise and admiration. as when he laid down his life for the fervice of his country. As, to the great Superintendant of the universe, the greatest and the smallest exertions Vol. II.

of his power, the formation and dissolution of a world, the formation and dissolution of a bubble, were equally easy, were equally admirable, and equally the effects of the same divine wisdom and benevolence; so, to the Stoical wise man, what we would call the great action required no more exertion than the little one, was equally easy, proceeded from exactly the same principles, was in no respect more meritorious, nor worthy of any higher degree of praise and admiration.

As all those who had arrived at this state of perfection, were equally happy; fo all those who fell in the smallest degree short of it, how nearly foever they might approach to it, were equally As the man, they faid, who was but an inch below the furface of the water, could no more breathe than he who was a hundred yards below it; so the man who had not completely fubdued all his private, partial, and felfish pasfions, who had any other earnest desire but that for the universal happiness, who had not completely emerged from that abyss of misery and disorder into which his anxiety for the gratification of those private, partial, and felfish passions had involved him, could no more breathe the free air of liberty and independency, could no more enjoy the fecurity and happiness of the wife man, than he who was most remote from that situation. actions of the wife man were perfect, and equally perfect; so all those of the man who had not arrived at this supreme wisdom were faulty, and,

as some Stoics pretended, equally faulty. As one truth, they said, could not be more true, nor one falshood more false than another; so an honorable action could not be more honorable, nor a shameful one more shameful than another. As in shooting at a mark, the man who missed it by an inch, had equally missed it with him who had done so by a hundred yards; so the man who, in what to us appears the most insignificant action, had acted improperly and without a sufficient reason, was equally faulty with him who had done so in, what to us appears, the most important; the man who has killed a cock, for example, improperly and without a sufficient reason, with him who had murdered his father.

If the first of those two paradoxes should appear fufficiently violent, the fecond is evidently too abfurd to deferve any ferious confideration. It is indeed; fo very abfurd that one can scarce help fuspecting that it must have been in some measure misunderstood or misrepresented. At any rate, I cannot allow myself to believe that such men as Zeno or Cleanthes, men, it is faid, of the most fimple as well as of the most sublime eloquence, could be the anthors, either of these, or of the greater part of the other Stoical paradoxes, which are in general mere impertinent quibbles, and do fo little honor to their system that I shall give no further account of them. I am disposed to impute them rather to Chrysippus, the disciple and follower, indeed, of Zeno and Cleanthes, but who, from all that has been delivered

down to us concerning him, feems to have been a mere dialectical pedant, without taste or elegance of any kind. He may have been the first who reduced their doctrines into a scholastic or technical system of artificial definitions, divisions, and subdivisions; one of the most effectual expedients, perhaps, for extinguishing whatever degree of good sense there may be in any moral or metaphysical doctrine. Such a man may very easily be supposed to have understood too literally some animated expressions of his masters in describing the happiness of the man of perfect virtue, and the unhappiness of whoever fell short of that character.

The Stoics in general feem to have admitted that there might be a degree of proficiency in those who had not advanced to perfect virtue and happiness. They distributed those proficients into different classes, according to the degree of their advancement; and they called the imperfect virtues which they supposed them capable of exercifing, not rectitudes, but proprieties, fitnesses, decent and becoming actions, for which a plausible or probable reason could be assigned, what Cicero expresses by the Latin word officia, and Seneca, I think more exactly, by that of convenientia. The doctrine of those imperfect, but attainable virtues, feems to have constituted what we may call the practical morality of the Stoics. It is the subject of Cicero's Offices; and is said to have been that of an other book written by Marcus Brutus, but which is now loft.

The plan and fystem which Nature has sketched out for our conduct, feems to be altogether different from that of the Stoical philosophy.

By Nature the events which immediately affect that little department in which we ourselves have fome little management and direction, which immediately affect ourselves, our friends, our country, are the events which interest us the most, and which chiefly excite our defires and aversions, our hopes and fears, our joys and forrows. Should those passions be, what they are very apt to be; too vehement, Nature, has provided a proper remedy and correction. The real or even the imaginary presence of the impartial spectator, the authority of the man within the breaft, is always at hand to overawe them into the proper tone and temper of moderation.

If, notwithstanding our most faithful exertions, all the events which can affect this little department, should turn out the most unfortunate and disastrous, Nature has by no means left us without consolation. That consolation may be drawn. not only from the complete approbation of the man within the breast, but, if possible, from a still nobler and more generous principle, from a firm reliance upon, and a reverential submission to, that benevolent wisdom which directs all the events of human life, and which, we may be affured, would never have fuffered those mistortunes to happen, had they not been indispensably

necessary for the good of the whole.

Nature has not prescribed to us this sublime

contemplation as the great business and occupation of our lives. She only points it out to us as the consolation of our misfortunes. The Stoical philosophy prescribes it as the great business and occupation of our lives. That philosophy teaches us to interest ourselves earnestly and anxiously in no events, external to the good order of our own minds, to the propriety of our own chusing and rejecting, except in those which concern a department where we neither have nor ought to have any fort of management or direction, the department of the great Superintendant of the universe. By the perfect apathy which it prescribes to us, by endeavouring, not merely to moderate, but to eradicate all our private, partial, and felfish affections, by fuffering us to feel for whatever can befal ourselves, our friends, our country, not even the sympathetic and reduced passions of the impartial spectator, it endeavours to render us altogether indifferent and unconcerned in the fuccess or miscarriage of every thing which Nature has prescribed to us as the proper business and occupation of our lives.

The reasonings of philosophy, it may be said, though they may confound and perplex the understanding, can never break down the necessary connexion which Nature has established between causes and their effects. The causes which naturally excite our desires and aversions, our hopes and fears, our joys and forrows, would no doubt, notwithstanding all the reasonings of Stoicism, produce upon each individual, according to the degree

of his actual fensibility, their proper and necessary effects. The judgments of the man within the breast, however, might be a good deal affected by those reasonings, and that great inmate might be thought by them to attempt to overawe all our private, partial, and selfish affections into a more or less perfect tranquillity. To direct the judgments of this inmate is the great purpose of all systems of morality. That the Stoical philosophy had very great influence upon the character and conduct of its sollowers, cannot be doubted; and that though it might sometimes incite them to unnecessary violence, its general tendency was to animate them to actions of the most heroic magnanimity and most extensive benevolence.

IV. Besides these ancient, there are some modern fystems, according to which virtue consists in propriety, or in the fuitableness of the affection from which we act, to the cause or object which excites it. The fystem of Dr. Clark, which places virtue in acting according to the relations of things, in regulating our conduct according to the fitness or incongruity which there may be in the application of certain actions to certain things, or to certain relations: that of Mr. Woollasten, which places it in acting according to the truth of things, according to their proper nature and effence, or in treating them as what they really are, and not as what they are not: that of my Lord Shaftesbury, which places it in maintaining a proper balance of the affections, and in allowing no passion to go beyond its proper sphere; are all of them. more or less inaccurate descriptions of the same fundamental idea.

None of those systems either give, or even do pretend to give any precise or distinct measure by which this fitness or propriety of affection can be ascertained or judged of. That precise and distinct measure can be found nowhere but in the sympathetic feelings of the impartial and well-informed

spectator.

The description of virtue, besides, which is either given, or at least meant and intended to be given in each of those systems, for some of the modern authors are not very fortunate in their manner of expressing themselves, is no doubt quite just, so far as it goes. There is no virtue without propriety, and wherever there is propriety, fome degree of approbation is due. But still this description is imperfect, For though propriety is an effential ingredient in every virtuous action, it is not always the fole ingredient. Beneficent actions have in them another quality by which they appear not only to deferve approbation but recompence. None of those systems account either eafily or fufficiently for that superior degree of efteem which feems due to fuch actions, or for that diverfity of fentiment which they naturally excite. Neither is the description of vice more complete. For, in the fame manner, though impropriety is a necessary ingredient in every vicious action, it is not always the fole ingredient; and there is often the highest degree of absurdity and impropriety in very harmless and

infignificant actions. Deliberate actions, of a pernicious tendency to those we live with, have, besides their impropriety, a peculiar quality of their own by which they appear to deserve, not only disapprobation, but punishment; and to be the objects, not of dislike merely, but of resentment and revenge: and none of those systems easily and sufficiently account for that superior degree of detestation which we feel for such actions.

CHAP. II.

Of those Systems which make Virtue consist in Prudence.

THE most ancient of those systems which make virtue consist in prudence, and of which any considerable remains have come down to us, is that of Epicurus, who is said, however, to have borrowed all the leading principles of his philosophy from some of those who had gone before him, particularly from Aristippus; though it is very probable, notwithstanding this allegation of his enemies, that at least his manner of applying those principles was altogether his own.

According to Epicurus, bodily pleasure and pain were the sole ultimate objects of natural desire and aversion. That they were always the natural objects of those passions, he thought required no proof. Pleasure might, indeed, appear sometimes to

See Cicero de finibus, lib. i. Diogenes Laert. I. x.

be avoided; not, however, because it was pleafure, but because, by the enjoyment of it, we should either forfeit some greater pleasure, or expose ourselves to some pain that was more to be avoided than this pleasure was to be defired. Pain, in the same manner, might appear sometimes to be eligible; not, however, because it was pain, but because by enduring it we might either avoid a full greater pain, or acquire some pleasure of much more importance. That bodily pain and pleasure, therefore, were always the natural objects of defire and aversion, was, he thought, abundantly evident. Nor was it less so, he imagined, that they were the fole ultimate objects of those passions. Whatever else was either desired or avoided, was fo, according to him, upon account of its tendency to produce one or other of those fensations. The tendency to procure pleafure rendered power and riches defirable, as the contrary tendency to produce pain made poverty and infignificancy the objects of aversion. Honor and reputation were valued, because the esteem and love of those we live with were of the greatest consequence both to procure pleasure and to defend us from pain. Ignominy and bad fame, on the contrary, were to be avoided, because the hatred, contempt, and refentment of those we lived with, destroyed all security, and necessarily expofed us to the greatest bodily evils.

All the pleasures and pains of the mind were, according to Epicurus, ultimately derived from those of the body. The mind was happy when it thought of the past pleasures of the body, and

hoped for others to come: and it was miserable when it thought of the pains which the body had formerly endured, and dreaded the same or greater thereafter.

But the pleasures and pains of the mind, though ultimately derived from those of the body, were vaftly greater than their originals. body felt only the sensation of the present instant, whereas the mind felt also the past and the future, the one by remembrance, the other by anticipation, and consequently both suffered and enjoyed much more. When we are under the greatest bodily pain, he observed, we shall always find, if we attend to it, that it is not the fuffering of the present instant which chiefly torments us, but either the agonizing remembrance of the past, or the yet more horrible dread of the future. The pain of each instant, considered by itself, and cut off from all that goes before and all that comes after it, is a trifle, not worth the regarding. Yet this is all which the body can ever be faid to fuffer. In the fame manner, when we enjoy the greatest pleasure, we shall always find that the bodily fensation, the fensation of the present inflant, makes but a small part of our happiness, that our enjoyment chiefly arises either from the cheerful recollection of the past, or the still more joyous anticipation of the future, and that the mind always contributes by much the largest share of the entertainment.

Since our happiness and misery, therefore, depended chiefly on the mind, if this part of our nature was well disposed, if our thoughts and

opinions were as they should be, it was of little Importance in what manner our body was affected. Though under great bodily pain, we might still enjoy a confiderable share of happiness, if our reason and judgment maintained their superiority. We might entertain ourselves with the remembrance of past, and with the hopes of future pleasure; we might soften the rigor of our pains, by recollecting what it was which, even in this fituation, we were under any necessity of suffering. That this was merely the bodily fensation, the pain of the present instant, which by itself could never be very great. That whatever agony we fuffered from the dread of its continuance. was the effect of an opinion of the mind, which might be corrected by juster fentiments, by confidering that, if our pains were violent, they would probably be of short duration; and that if they were of long continuance, they would probably be moderate, and admit of many intervals of ease; and that, at any rate, death was always at hand and within call to deliver us, which as, according to him, it put an end to all fensation, either of pain or pleasure, could not be regarded as an evil. When we are, faid he, death is not; and when death is, we are not; death therefore can be nothing to us.

If the actual fensation of positive pain was in itself so little to be feared, that of pleasure was still less to be defired. Naturally the sensation of pleasure was much less pungent than that of pain. If, therefore, this last could take so very little from the happiness of a well-disposed mind, the other could add scarce any thing to it. When the body was free from pain and the mind from fear and anxiety, the superadded sensation of bodily pleasure could be of very little importance; and though it might diversity, could not properly be said to increase the happiness of this situation.

In ease of body, therefore, and in security or tranquillity of mind, consisted, according to Epicurus, the most perfect state of human nature; the most complete happiness which man was capable of enjoying. To obtain this great end of natural desire was the sole object of all the virtues, which according to him, were not desirable upon their own account, but upon account of their tendency to bring about this situation.

Prudence, for example, though, according to this philosophy, the source and principle of all the virtues, was not desirable upon its own account. That careful and laborious and circumspect state of mind, ever watchful and ever attentive to the most distant consequences of every action, could not be a thing pleasant or agreeable for its own sake, but upon account of its tendency to procure the greatest goods and to keep off the greatest evils.

To abstain from pleasure too, to curb and restrain our natural passions for enjoyment, which was the office of temperance, could never be desirable for its own sake. The whole value of this virtue arose from its utility, from its enabling us to post-pone the present enjoyment for the sake of a greater to come, or to avoid a greater pain that might ensue

from it. Temperance in short, was nothing but

prudence with regard to pleafure.

To support labor, to endure pain to be expofed to danger or to death, the fituations which fortitude would often lead us into, were furely still less the objects of natural defire. They were chosen only to avoid greater evils. We submitted to labor, in order to avoid the greater shame and pain of poverty, and we exposed ourselves to danger and death in defence of our liberty and propriety, the means and instruments of pleasure and happiness; or in defence of our country, in the fafety of which our own was necessarily comprehended. Fortitude enabled us to do all this cheerfully, as the best which, in our present fituation, could possibly be done, and was in reality no more than prudence, good judgment, and prefence of mind in properly appreciating pain, labor, and danger, always chufing the less in order to avoid the greater.

It is the same case with justice. To abstain from what is another's was not desirable on its own account, and it could not surely be better for you, that I should possess what is my own, than that you should possess it. You ought, however, to abstain from whatever belongs to me, because by doing otherwise you will provoke the resentment and indignation of mankind. The security and tranquility of your mind will be entirely destroyed. You will be filled with fear and consternation at the thought of that punishment which you will imagine that men are

at all times ready to inflict upon you, and from which no power, no art, no concealment, will ever, in your own fancy, be sufficient to protect you. That other species of justice which confists in doing proper good offices to different persons, according to the various relations of neighbours, kinsmen, friends, benefactors, superiors, or equals, which they may stand in to us, is recommended by the same reason. To act properly in all these different relations procures us the esteem and love of those we live with; as to do otherwise excites their contempt and hatred. By the one we naturally fecure, by the other we necessarily endanger our own ease and tranquillity, the great and ultimate objects of all our defires. The whole virtue of justice, therefore, the most important of all the virtues, is no more than discreet and prudent conduct with regard to our neighbours.

Such is the doctrine of Epicurus concerning the nature of virtue. It may seem extraordinary that this philosopher, who is described as a person of the most amiable manners, should never have observed, that, whatever may be the tendency of those virtues, or of the contrary vices, with regard to our bodily ease and security, the sentiments which they naturally excite in others are the objects of a much more passionate desire or aversion than all their other consequences; that to be amiable, to be respectable, to be the proper object of esteem, is by every well-disposed mind more valued than all the ease and security which love, respect, and esteem can procure us; that, on

the contrary, to be odious, to be contemptible, to be the proper object of indignation, is more dreadful than all that we can suffer in our body from hatred, contempt, or indignation; and that consequently our desire of the one character, and our aversion to the other, cannot arise from any regard to the effects which either of them is likely

to produce upon the body.

This fystem is, no doubt, altogether inconsistent with that which I have been endeavouring to establish. It is not difficult, however, to discover from what phasis; if I may say so, from what particular view or aspect of nature, this account of things derives its probability. By the wife contrivance of the Author of nature, virtue is upon all ordinary occasions, even with regard to this life, real wisdom, and the surest and readiest means of obtaining both fafety and advantage. Our fuccess or disappointment in our undertakings must very much depend upon the good or bad opinion which is commonly entertained of us, and upon the general disposition of those we live with, either to assist or to oppose us. But the best, the surest, the easiest, and the readiest way of obtaining the advantageous and of avoiding the unfavorable judgements of others, is undoubtedly to render ourselves the proper objects of the former and not of the latter. "Do you desire," said Socrates, " the reputation " of a good mufician? The only fure way of ober taining it, is to become a good musician. Would « you defire in the same manner to be thought ca-" pable of ferving your country either as a general

" or as a statesman? The best way in this case too " is really to acquire the art and experience of war " and government, and to become really fit to " be a general or a statesman. And in the same " manner if you would be reckoned fober, tempe-" rate, just, and equitable, the best way of acquiring " this reputation is to become fober, temperate, just, " and equitable. If you can really render yourfelf " amiable, respectable, and the proper object of " esteem, there is no fear of your not soon ac-" quiring the love, the respect, and esteem of " those you live with." Since the practice of virtue, therefore, is in general fo advantageous, and that of vice fo contrary to our interest, the confideration of those opposite tendencies undoubtedly stamps an additional beauty and propriety upon the one, and a new deformity and impropriety upon the other. Temperance, magnanimity, justice, and beneficence, come thus to be approved of, not only under their proper characters, but under the additional character of the highest wisdom and most real prudence. And in the same manner, the contrary vices of intemperance, pufillanimity, injuffice, and either malevolence or fordid felfishness, come to be disapproved of, not only under their proper characters, but under the additional character of the most short-sighted folly and weakness. Epicurus appears in every virtue to have attended to this species of propriety only. It is that which is most apt to occur to those who are endeavouring to perfuade others to regularity of conduct. When men by their Vol. II.

practice, and perhaps too by their maxims, manifestly show that the natural beauty of virtue is not like to have much effect upon them, how is it possible to move them but by representing the folly of their conduct, and how much they themselves

are in the end likely to fuffer by it?

By running up all the different virtues too to this one species of propriety, Epicurus indulged a propenfity, which is natural to all men, but which philosophers in particular are apt to cultivate with a peculiar fondness, as the great means of displaying their ingenuity, the propenfity to account for all appearances from as few principles as possible. And he, no doubt, indulged this propenfity still further, when he referred all the primary objects of natural defire and aversion to the pleasures and pains of the body. The great patron of the atomical philosophy, who took so much pleasure in deducing all the powers and qualities of bodies from the most obvious and familiar, the figure, motion, and arrangement of the small parts of matter, felt no doubt a fimilar fatisfaction, when he accounted, in the same manner, for all the fentiments and passions of the mind from those which are most obvious and familiar.

The fystem of Epicurus agreed with those of Plato, Aristotle, and Zeno, in making virtue confist in acting in the most suitable manner to obtain? primary objects of natural defire. It differed from all of them in two other respects; first, in the

Prima natura.

account which it gave of those primary objects of natural defire; and fecondly, in the account which it gave of the excellence of virtue, or of the reason

why that quality ought to be effeemed.

The primary objects of natural defire confifted, according to Epicurus, in bodily pleasure and pain, and in nothing else: whereas, according to the other three philosophers, there were many other objects, fuch as knowledge, fuch as the happiness of our relations, of our friends, of our country, which were ultimately defirable for their own fakes.

Virtue too, according to Epicurus, did not deserve to be pursued for its own sake, nor was itself one of the ultimate objects of natural appetite. but was eligible, only upon account of its tendency to prevent pain and to procure eafe and pleafure. In the opinion of the other three, on the contrary, it was defirable, not merely as the means of procuring the other primary objects of natural defire, but as fomething which was in itself more valuable than them all. Man, they thought, being born for action, his happiness must consist, not merely in the agreeableness of his passive sensations, but also in the propriety of his active exertions.

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C H A P. III.

Of those Systems which make Virtue confist in Benevolence.

I HE fystem which makes virtue consist in benevolence, though I think not fo ancient as all those which I have already given an account of, is, however, of very great antiquity. It feems to have been the doctrine of the greater part of those philosophers who, about and after the age of Augustus, called themselves Eclectics, who pretended to follow chiefly the opinions of Plato and Pythagoras, and who upon that account are commonly known by the name of the later Platonists.

In the divine nature, according to these authors, benevolence or love was the fole principle of action, and directed the exertion of all the other attributes. The wisdom of the Deity was employed in finding out the means for bringing about those ends which his goodness suggested, as his infinite power was exerted to execute them. Benevolence, however, was still the supreme and governing attribute, to which the others were fubservient, and from which the whole excellency, or the whole morality, if I may be allowed fuch an expreffion, of the divine operations, was ultimately derived. The whole perfection and virtue of the human mind confifted in some resemblance or participation of the divine perfections, and, consequently, in being filled with the same principle of benevolence and love which influenced

all the actions of the Deity. The actions of men which flowed from this motive were alone truly praise-worthy, or could claim any merit in the fight of the Deity. It was by actions of charity and love only that we could imitate, as became us, the conduct of God, that we could express our humble and devout admiration of his infinite perfections, that by fostering in our own minds the same divine principle, we could bring our own affections to a greater resemblance with his holy attributes, and thereby become more proper objects of his love and esteem; till at last we arrived at that immediate converse and communication with the Deity to which it was the great object of this philosophy to raise us.

This lystem, as it was much esteemed by many ancient fathers of the Christian church, so after the Reformation it was adopted by several divines of the most eminent piety and learning and of the most amiable manners; particularly, by Dr. Ralph Cudworth, by Dr. Henry More, and by Mr. John Smith of Cambridge. But of all the patrons of this system, ancient or modern, the late Dr. Hutcheson was undoubtedly, beyond all comparison, the most acute, the most distinct, the most philosophical, and what is of the greatest consequence of all, the soberest and most judicious.

That virtue confists in benevolence is a notion supported by many appearances in human nature. It has been observed already, that proper benevolence is the most graceful and agreeable of all the affections, that it is recommended to

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us by a double sympathy, that as its tendency is necessarily beneficent, it is the proper object of gratitude and reward, and that upon all these accounts it appears to our natural fentiments to poffess a merit fuperior to any other. It has been observed too, that even the weaknesses of benevolence are not very difagreeable to us, whereas those of every other passion are always extremely difgusting. Who does not abhor excessive malice. excessive selfishness, or excessive resentment? But the most excessive indulgence even of partial friendship is not so offensive. It is the benevolent passions only which can exert themselves without any regard or attention to propriety, and yet retain fomething about them which is engaging. There is fomething pleafing even in mere inftinctive good-will which goes on to do good offices without once reflecting whether by this conduct it is the proper object either of blame or approbation. It is not fo with the other passions. The moment they are deferted, the moment they are unaccompanied by the fense of propriety. they cease to be agreeable.

As benevolence bestows upon those actions which proceed from it, beauty superior to all others, so the want of it, and much more the contrary inclination, communicates a peculiar desormity to whatever evidences such a disposition. Pernicious actions are often punishable for no other reason than because they show a want of sufficient attention to the happiness of

our neighbour.

Besides all this, Dr. Hutcheson ' observed, that whenever in any action, supposed to proceed from benevolent affections, some other motive had been discovered, our sense of the merit of this action was just so far diminished as this motive was believed to have influenced it. If an action. supposed to proceed from gratitude, should be discovered to have arisen from an expectation of fome new favor, or if what was apprehended to proceed from public spirit, should be found out to have taken its origin from the hope of a pecuniary reward, fuch a discovery would entirely destroy all notion of merit or praile-worthiness in either of these actions. Since, therefore, the mixture of any felfish motive, like that of a baser alloy, diminished or took away altogether the merit which would otherwise have belonged to any action, it was evident, he imagined, that virtue must confift in pure and difinterested benevolence alone.

When those actions, on the contrary, which are commonly supposed to proceed from a selfish motive, are discovered to have arisen from a benevolent one, it greatly enhances our sense of their merit. If we believed of any person that he endeavoured to advance his fortune from no other view but that of doing friendly offices, and of making proper returns to his benefactors, we should only love and esteem him the more. And this observation seemed still more to confirm the conclusion, that it was benevolence only which could stamp upon any action the character of virtue.

See Inquiry concerning Virtue, fect, 1 and 2.

Last of all, what, he imagined, was an evident proof of the justness of this account of virtue, in all the disputes of casuists concerning the rectitude of conduct, the public good, he observed, was the standard to which they constantly referred; thereby univerfally acknowledging that whatever tended to promote the happiness of mankind was right and laudable and virtuous, and the contrary, wrong, blamable, and vicious. In the late debates about passive obedience and the right of refistance, the fole point in controversy among men of fense was whether universal submission would probably be attended with greater evils than temporary infurrections when privileges were invaded. Whether what, upon the whole, tended most to the happiness of mankind, was not alfo morally good, was never once, he faid, made a question.

Since benevolence, therefore, was the only motive which could bestow upon any action the character of virtue, the greater the benevolence which was evidenced by any action, the greater

the praise which must belong to it.

Those actions which aimed at the happiness of a great community, as they demonstrated a more enlarged benevolence than those which aimed only at that of a smaller system, so were they, likewise, proportionally the more virtuous. The most virtuous of all affections, therefore, was that which embraced as its object the happiness of all intelligent beings. The least virtuous, on the contrary, of those to which the character of virtue could in any respect belong, was that which

aimed no further than at the happiness of an individual, such as a son, a brother, a friend.

In directing all our actions to promote the greatest possible good, in submitting all inferior affections to the desire of the general happiness of mankind, in regarding one's self but as one of the many, whose prosperity was to be pursued no further than it was consistent with, or conducive to that of the whole, consisted the perfection of virtue.

Self-love was a principle which could never be virtuous in any degree or in any direction. It was vicious whenever it obstructed the general good. When it had no other effect than to make the individual take care of his own happiness, it was merely innocent, and though it deserved no praise, neither ought it to incur any blame. Those benevolent actions which were performed, notwithstanding some strong motive from self-interest, were the more virtuous upon that account. They demonstrated the strength and vigor of the benevolent principle.

Dr. Hutcheson was so far from allowing selflove to be in any cases a motive of virtuous actions, that even a regard to the pleasure of self-approbation, to the comfortable applause of our own consciences, according to him, diminished the merit of a benevolent action. This was a selfish motive, he thought, which, so far as it contributed to any action, demonstrated the weakness of that pure

Inquiry concerning Virtue, fect. 2. art. 4. also Illustrations on the moral sense, sect. 5. last paragraph.

and difinterested benevolence which could alone stamp upon the conduct of man the character of virtue. In the common judgments of mankind, however, this regard to the approbation of our own minds is fo far from being confidered as what can in any respect diminish the virtue of any action, that it is rather looked upon as the fole motive which deferves the appellation of virtuous.

Such is the account given of the nature of virtue in this amiable fystem, a system which has a peculiar tendency to nourish and support in the human heart the noblest and the most agreeable of all affections, and not only to check the injustice of felf-love, but in some measure to discourage that principle altogether, by representing it as what could never reflect any honor upon those who were influenced by it.

As fome of the other fystems which I have already given an account of, do not fufficiently explain from whence arises the peculiar excellency of the supreme virtue of beneficence, so this system feems to have the contrary defect, of not fufficiently explaining from whence arises our approbation of the inferior virtues of prudence, vigilance, circumspection, temperance, constancy, firmness. The view and aim of our affections, the beneficent and hurtful effects which they tend to produce, are the only qualities at all attended to in this fystem. Their propriety and impropriety, their fuitableness and unsuitableness, to the cause which excites them, are difregarded altogether.

Regard to our own private happiness and interest, too, appear upon many occasions very laudable principles of action. The habits of economy. industry, descretion, attention, and application of thought, are generally supposed to be cultivated from felf-interested motives, and at the same time are apprehended to be very praife-worthy qualities, which deserve the esteem and approbation of every body. The mixture of a felfish motive, it is true, feems often to fully the beauty of those actions which ought to arife from a benevolent affection. The cause of this, however, is not that felf-love can never be the motive of a virtuous action, but that the benevolent principle appears in this peculiar case to want its due degree of strength, and to be altogether unsuitable to its object. The character, therefore, feems evidently imperfect, and upon the whole to deserve blame rather than praise. The mixture of a benevolent motive in an action to which felf-love alone ought to be fufficient to prompt us, is not fo apt indeed to diminish our sense of its propriety, or of the virtue of the person who performs it. We are not ready to suspect any person of being defective in felfishness. This is by no means the weak fide of human nature, or the failing of which we are apt to be fuspicious. If we could really believe, however, of any man, that, was it not from a regard to his family and friends, he would not take that proper care of his health, his life, or his fortune, to which felf-preservation alone ought to be fufficient to prompt him, it would undoubtedly be

a failing, though one of those amiable failings, which render a person rather the object of pity than of contempt or hatred. It would still, however, somewhat diminish the dignity and respectableness of his character. Carelessness and want of economy are universally disapproved of, not, however, as proceeding from a want of benevolence, but from a want of the proper attention to the objects of self-interest.

Though the standard by which casuists frequently determine what is right or wrong in human conduct, be its tendency to the welfare or disorder of society, it does not follow that a regard to the welfare of society should be the sole virtuous motive of action, but only that, in any competition, it ought to cast the balance against all other

motives.

Benevolence may, perhaps, be the fole principle of action in the Deity, and there are several, not improbable, arguments which tend to perfuade us that it is so. It is not easy to conceive what other motive an independent and all-perfect Being, who stands in need of nothing external, and whose happiness is complete in himself, can act from. But whatever may be the case with the Deity, so imperfect a creature as man, the support of whose existence requires so many things external to him, must often act from many other motives. The condition of human nature were peculiarly hard, if those affections, which, by the very nature of our being, ought frequently to influence our conduct, could upon no occasion

appear virtuous, or deserve esteem and commendation from any body.

Those three systems, that which places virtue in propriety, that which places it in prudence, and that which makes it consist in benevolence, are the principal accounts which have been given of the nature of virtue. To one or other of them, all the other descriptions of virtue, how different soever they may appear, are easily reducible.

That fystem which places virtue in obedience to the will of the Deity, may be counted either among those which make it confist in prudence. or among those which make it consist in propriety. When it is asked, why we ought to obey the will of the Deity, this question, which would be impious and abfurd in the highest degree, if asked from any doubt that we ought to obey him. can admit but of two different answers. It must either be faid that we ought to obey the will of the Deity because he is a Being of infinite power. who will reward us eternally if we do fo, and punish us eternally if we do otherwise: or it must be faid, that independent of any regard to our own happiness, or to rewards and punishments of any kind, there is a congruity and fitness that a creature should obey its creator, that a limited and imperfect being should submit to one of infinite and incomprehenfible perfections. Besides one or other of these two, it is impossible to conceive that any other answer can be given to this question. If the first answer be the proper one, virtue

confifts in prudence, or in the proper pursuit of our own final interest and happiness; since it is upon this account that we are obliged to obey the will of the Deity. If the second answer be the proper one, virtue must consist in propriety, since the ground of our obligation to obedience is the suitableness or congruity of the sentiments of humility and submission to the superiority of the object which excites them.

That fystem which places virtue in utility, coincides too with that which makes it confift in propriety. According to this fystem, all those qualities of the mind which are agreeable or advantageous, either to the person himself or to others, are approved of as virtuous, and the contrary disapproved of as vicious. But the agreeableness or utility of any affection depends upon the degree which it is allowed to fubfift in. Every affection is useful when it is confined to a certain degree of moderation; and every affection is disadvantageous when it exceeds the proper bounds. According to this fystem, therefore, virtue consists not in any one affection, but in the proper degree of all the affections. The only difference between it and that which I have been endeavouring to effablish, is, that it makes utility, and not fympathy, or the correspondent affection of the spectator, the natural and original measure of this proper degree.

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C H A P. IV.

Of licentious Systems.

ALL those systems, which I have hitherto given an account of, suppose that there is a real and essential distinction between vice and virtue, whatever these qualities may consist in. There is a real and essential difference between the propriety and impropriety of any affection, between benevolence and any other principle of action, between real prudence and short-sighted folly or precipitate rashness. In the main too all of them contribute to encourage the praise-worthy, and to discourage the blamable disposition.

It may be true, perhaps, of some of them, that they tend, in some measure, to break the balance of the affections, and to give the mind a particular bias to some principles of action, beyond the proportion that is due to them. The ancient fystems, which place virtue in propriety, seem chiefly to recommend the great, the awful, and the respectable virtues, the virtues of felf-government and felf-command; fortitude, magnanimity, independency upon fortune, the contempt of all outward accidents, of pain, poverty, exile, and death. It is in these great exertions that the noblest propriety of conduct is displayed. The fost, the amiable, the gentle virtues, all the virtues of indulgent humanity are, in comparison, but little infifted upon, and feem, on the contrary, by the Stoics in particular, to have been often regarded

as mere weaknesses which it behoved a wise man not to harbour in his breast.

The benevolent fystem, on the other hand, while it fosters and encourages all those milder virtues in the highest degree, seems entirely to neglect the more lawful and respectable qualities of the mind. It even denies them the appellation of virtues. It calls them moral abilities, and treats them as qualities which do not deferve the fame fort of esteem and approbation, that is due to what is properly denominated virtue. All those principles of action which aim only at our own interest, it treats, if that be possible, still worse. So far from having any merit of their own, they diminish, it pretends, the merit of benevolence, when they co-operate with it: and prudence, it is afferted, when employed only in promoting private interest, can never even be imagined a virtue.

That fystem, again, which makes virtue consist in prudence only, while it gives the highest encouragement to the habits of caution, vigilance, sobriety, and judicious moderation, seems to degrade equally both the amiable and respectable virtues, and to strip the former of all their beauty, and

the latter of all their grandeur.

But notwithstanding these desects, the general tendency of each of those three systems is to encourage the best and most laudable habits of the human mind: and it were well for society, if, either mankind in general, or even those sew who pretend to live according to any philosophical rule, were to

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regulate their conduct by the precepts of any one of them. We may learn from each of them something that is both valuable and peculiar. If it was possible, by precept and exhortation, to inspire the mind with fortitude and magnanimity, the ancient fystems of propriety would feem sufficient to do this. Or if it was possible, by the same means, to foften it into humanity, and to awaken the affections of kindness and general love towards those we live with, some of the pictures with which the benevolent system presents us, might feem capable of producing this effect. We may learn from the fystem of Epicurus, though undoubtedly the most imperfect of all the three, how much the practice of both the amiable and respectable virtues is conducive to our own interest, to our own ease and safety and quiet even in this life. As Epicurus placed happiness in the attainment of ease and security, he exerted himself in a particular manner to show that virtue was, not merely the best and the surest, but the only means of acquiring those invaluable possessions. The good effects of virtue, upon our inward tranquillity and peace of mind, are what other philosophers have chiefly celebrated. Epicurus, without neglecting this topic, has chiefly infifted upon the influence of that amiable quality on our outward prosperity and fafety. It was upon this account that his writings were fo much studied in the ancient world by men of all different philosophical parties. It is from him that Cicero, the great enemy of the Epicurean system, borrows his most agreeable proofs Vol. II.

that virtue alone is sufficient to secure happiness. Seneca, though a Stoic, the sect most opposite to that of Epicurus, yet quotes this philosopher more

frequently than any other.

There is, however, another fystem which seems to take away altogether the distinction between vice and virtue, and of which the tendency is, upon that account, wholly pernicious: I mean the system of Dr. Mandeville. Though the notions of this author are in almost every respect erroneous, there are, however, some appearances in human nature, which, when viewed in a certain manner, seem at first sight to savor them. These, described and exaggerated by the lively and humorous, though coarse and rustic eloquence of Dr. Mandeville, have thrown upon his doctrines an air of truth and probability which is very apt to impose upon the unskilful.

Dr. Mandeville confiders whatever is done from a fense of propriety, from a regard to what is commendable and praise-worthy, as being done from a love of praise and commendation, or as he calls it from vanity. Man, he observes, is naturally much more interested in his own happiness than in that of others, and it is impossible that in his heart he can ever really prefer their prosperity to his own. Whenever he appears to do so, we may be affured that he imposes upon us, and that he is then acting from the same selfish motives as at all other times. Among his other selfish passions, vanity is one of the strongest, and he is always easily slattered and greatly delighted

with the applauses of those about him. When he appears to facrifice his own interest to that of his companions, he knows that this conduct will be highly agreeable to their felf-love, and that they will not fail to express their fatisfaction by bestowing upon him the most extravagant praises. The pleasure which he expects from this, overbalances, in his opinion, the interest which he abandons in order to procure it. His conduct. therefore, upon this occasion, is in reality just as felfish, and arises from just as mean a motive as upon any other. He is flattered, however. and he flatters himself with the belief that it is entirely difinterested; since, unless this was suppofed, it would not feem to merit any commendation either in his own eyes or in those of others. All public spirit, therefore, all preference of public to private interest, is, according to him. a mere cheat and imposition upon mankind; and that human virtue which is fo much boafted of. and which is the occasion of so much emulation among men, is the mere offspring of flattery begot upon pride.

Whether the most generous and public-spirited actions may not, in some sense, be regarded as proceeding from self-love, I shall not at present examine. The decision of this question is not, I apprehend, of any importance towards establishing the reality of virtue, since self-love may frequently be a virtuous motive as action. I shall only endeavour to show that the desire of doing what is honorable and noble, of rendering ourselves

the proper objects of esteem and approbation, cannot with any propriety be called vanity. Even the love of well grounded fame and reputation, the defire of acquiring effeem by what is really estimable, does not deserve that name. The first is the love of virtue, the noblest and the best pasfion of human nature. The fecond is the love of true glory, a passion, inferior no doubt to the former, but which in dignity appears to come immediately after it. He is guilty of vanity who defires praise for qualities which are either not praife-worthy in any degree, 'or not in that degree in which he expects to be praifed for them; who fets his character upon the frivolous ornaments of dress and equipage, or upon the equally frivolous accomplishments of ordinary behaviour. He is guilty of vanity who defires praise for what indeed very well deferves it, but what he perfectly knows does not belong to him. The empty coxcomb who gives himself airs of importance which he has no title to, the filly liar who assumes the merit of adventures which never happened, the foolish plagiary who gives himself out for the author of what he has no pretentions to, are properly accused of this passion. He too is said to be guilty of vanity who is not contented with the filent fentiments of esteem and approbation, who seems to be fonder of their noify expressions and acclamations than of the fentiments themselves, who is never fatisfied but when his own praifes are ringing in his ears, and who folicits with the most anxious importunity all external marks

of respect, is fond of titles, of compliments, of being visited, of being attended, of being taken notice of in public places with the appearance of deference and attention. This frivolous passion is altogether different from either of the two former, and is the passion of the lowest and the least of mankind, as they are of the noblest and the

greatest.

But though these three passions, the defire of rendering ourselves the proper objects of honor and esteem, or of becoming what is honorable and estimable; the desire of acquiring honor and esteem by really deserving those sentiments; and the frivolous defire of praise at any rate, are widely different; though the two former are always approved of, while the latter never fails to be despised; there is however, a certain remote affinity among them, which exaggerated by the humorous and diverting eloquence of this lively author, has enabled him to impose upon his readers. There is an affinity between vanity and the love of true glory, as both these passions aim at acquiring esteem and approbation. But they are different in this, that the one is a just, reafonable, and equitable passion, while the other is unjust, abfurd, and ridiculous. The man who defires esteem for what is really estimable, defires nothing but what he is justly entitled to, and what cannot be refused him without some fort of injury. He, on the contrary, who defires it upon any other terms, demands what he has no just claim to. The first is easily satisfied, is not

apt to be jealous or suspicious that we do not esterm him enough, and is seldom solicitous about receiving many external marks of our regard. The other, on the contrary, is never to be fatiffied, is full of jealoufy and fuspicion that we do not effeem him fo much as he defires, because he has fome fecret consciousness that he defires more The least neglect of ceremony, than he deferves. he confiders as a mortal affront, and as an expreffion of the most determined contempt. He is restless and impatient, and perpetually afraid that we have loft all respect for him, and is upon this account always anxious to obtain new expressions of esteem, and cannot be kept in temper but by continual attendance and adulation.

There is an affinity too between the defire of becoming what is honorable and estimable, and the defire of honor and efteem, between the love of virtue and the love of true glory. They refemble one another not only in this respect, that both aim at really being what is honorable and noble, but even in that respect in which the love of true glory refembles what is properly called vanity, some reference to the sentiments of others. The man of the greatest magnanimity, who desires virtue for its own fake, and is most indifferent about what actually are the opinions of mankind with regard to him, is still, however, delighted with the thoughts of what they should be, with the conscioufness that though he may neither be honored nor applauded, he is fill the proper object of honor and applause, and that if mankind were cool and

candid and confistent with themselves, and properly informed of the motives and circumstances of his conduct, they would not fail to honor and applaud him. Though he despises the opinions which are actually entertained of him, he has the highest value for those which ought to be entertained of him. That he might think himfelf worthy of those honorable sentiments, and, whatever was the idea which other men might conceive of his character, that when he should put himself in their situation, and consider, not what was, but what ought to be their opinion, he should always have the highest idea of it himfelf, was the great and exalted motive of his conduct. As even in the love of virtue, therefore, there is still some reference, though not to what is, yet to what in reason and propriety ought to be, the opinion of others, there is even in this respect some affinity between it, and the love of true glory. There is, however, at the same time, a very great difference between them. The man who acts folely from a regard to what is right and fit to be done, from a regard to what is the proper object of esteem and approbation, though these sentiments should never be bestowed upon him, acts from the most sublime and godlike motive which human nature is even capable of conceiving. The man, on the other hand, who while he defires to merit approbation is at the fame time anxious to obtain it, though he too is laudable in the main, yet his motives have a greater mixture of human infirmity. He is in danger of being

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mortified by the ignorance and injuffice of mankind, and his happiness is exposed to the envy of his rivals and the folly of the public. The happiness of the other, on the contrary, is altogether fecure and independent of fortune, and of the caprice of those he lives with. The contempt and hatred which may be thrown upon him by the ignorance of mankind, he confiders as not belonging to him, and is not at all mortified by it. Mankind despife and hate him from a salse notion of his character and conduct. If they knew him better, they would esteem and love him. It is not him whom, properly speaking, they hate and despise, but another person whom they mistake him to be. Our friend, whom we should meet at a masquerade in the garb of our enemy, would be more diverted than mortified, if under that difguife we should vent our indignation against him. Such are the fentiments of a man of real magnanimity, when exposed to unjust censure. It seldom happens, however, that human nature arrives at this degree of firmnels. Though none but the weakest and most worthless of mankind are much delighted with false glory, yet, by a strange inconsistency, false ignominy is often capable of mortifying those who appear the most resolute and determined.

Dr. Mandeville is not fatisfied with representing the frivolous motive of vanity, as the source of all those actions which are commonly accounted virtuous. He endeavours to point out the imperfection of human virtue in many other respects. In every case, he pretends, it falls short of that complete

felf-denial which it pretends to, and, instead of a conquest, is commonly no more than a concealed indulgence of our passions. Wherever our reserve with regard to pleasure falls short of the most ascetic abstinence, he treats it as gross luxury and fenfuality. Every thing, according to him, is luxury which exceeds what is absolutely necessary for the support of human nature, so that there is vice even in the use of a clean shirt, or of a convenient habitation. The indulgence of the inclination to fex, in the most lawful union, he confiders as the fame fenfuality with the most hurtful gratification of that passion, and derides that temperance and that chaftity which can be practifed at fo cheap a rate. The ingenious fophistry of his reasoning, is here, as upon many other occasions, covered by the ambiguity of language. There are fome of our passions which have no other names except those which mark the disagreeable and offensive degree. The spectator is more apt to take notice of them in this degree than in any other. When they shock his own fentiments, when they give him fome fort of antipathy and uneafiness, he is necessarily obliged to attend to them, and is from thence naturally led to give them a name. When they fall in with the natural state of his own mind, he is very apt to overlock them altogether, and either gives them no name at all, or, if he give them any, it is one which marks rather the subjection and restraint of the passion, than the degree which it still is allowed to subsist in, after it is so

fubjected and restrained. Thus the common names' of the love of pleasure, and of the love of fex, denote a vicious and offensive degree of those pasfions. The words temperance and chastity, on the other hand, feem to mark rather the restraint and fubjection which they are kept under, then the degree which they are still allowed to subsist in. When he can show, therefore, that they still fublist in some degree, he imagines, he has entirely demolished the reality of the virtues of temperance and chastity, and shown them to be mere impositions upon the inattention and fimplicity of mankind. Those virtues, however, do not require an entire infensibility to the objects of the passions which they mean to govern. They only aim at restraining the violence of those passions so far as not to hurt the individual, and neither diffurb nor offend the fociety.

It is the great fallacy of Dr. Mandeville's book? to reprefent every passion as wholly vicious, which is fo in any degree and in any direction. It is thus that he treats every thing as vanity which has any reference, either to what are, or to what ought to be the fentiments of others: and it is by means of this fophistry, that he establishes his favorite conclusion, that private vices are public benefits. If the love of magnificence, a taste for the elegant arts and improvements of human life, for whatever is agreeable in drefs, furniture, or equipage for architecture, statuary, painting, and mufic, is to be regarded as luxury, fenfuality,

Luxury and luft. Fable of the Bees.

and oftentation, even in those whose situation allows, without any inconveniency, the indulgence of those passions, it is certain that luxury, sensuality, and oftentation are public benefits: fince without the qualities upon which he thinks proper to bestow such opprobrious names, the arts of refinement could never find encouragement, and must languish for want of employment. Some popular afcetic doctrines which had been current before his time, and which placed virtue in the entire extirpation and annihilation of all our passions, were the real foundation of this licentious fystem. It was easy for Dr. Mandeville to prove, first, that this entire conquest never actually took place among men; and fecondly, that, if it was to take place univerfally, it would be pernicious to fociety, by putting an end to all industry and commerce, and in a manner to the whole bufiness of human life. By the first of these propositions he feemed to prove that there was no real virtue, and that what pretended to be fuch, was a mere cheat and imposition upon mankind; and by the fecond, that private vices were public benefits, fince without them no fociety could prosper or flourish.

Such is the fystem of Dr. Mandeville, which once made so much noise in the world, and which, though, perhaps, it never gave occasion to more vice than what would have been without it, at least taught that vice, which arose from other causes, to appear with more effrontery, and to avow the corruption of its motives with a profligate audaciousness which had never been heard of before.

But how destructive soever this system may appear, it could never have imposed upon so great a number of persons, nor have occasioned so general an alarm among those who are the friends of better principles, had it not in some respects bordered upon the truth. A fystem of natural philosophy may appear very plausible, and be for a long time very generally received in the world, and yet have no foundation in nature, nor any fort of refemblance to the truth. The vortices of Des Cartes were regarded by a very ingenious nation, for near a century together, as a most fatisfactory account of the revolutions of the heavenly bodies. Yet it has been demonstrated, to the conviction of all mankind, that these pretended causes of those wonderful effects, not only do not actually exist, but are utterly impossible, and if they did exift, could produce no fuch effects as are ascribed to them. But it is otherwise with fystems of moral philosophy, and an author who pretends to account for the origin of our moral fentiments, cannot deceive us fo grossly, nor depart fo very far from all refemblance to the truth. When a traveller gives an account of some distant country, he may impose upon our credulity the most groundless and abfurd fictions as the most certain matters of fact. But when a person pretends to inform us of what passes in our neighbourhood, and of the affairs of the very parish which we live in, though here too, if we are fo careless as not to examine things with our own eyes, he may deceive us in many respects, yet the greatest falshoods,

which he imposes upon us must bear some resemblance to the truth, and must even have a confiderable mixture of truth in them. An author who treats of natural philosophy, and pretends to affign the causes of the great phenomena of the universe, pretends to give an account of the affairs of a very distant country, concerning which he may tell us what he pleases, and as long as his narration keeps within the bounds of feeming possibility, he need not despair of gaining our belief. But when he proposes to explain the origin of our defires and affections, of our fentiments of approbation and disapprobation, he pretends to give an account, not only of the affairs of the very parish that we live in, but of our own domestic concerns. Though here too, like indolent masters who put their trust in a steward who deceives them, we are very liable to be imposed upon, yet we are incapable of passing any account which does not preserve some little regard to the truth. Some of the articles, at least, must be just, and even those which are most overcharged must have had some foundation, otherwise the fraud would be detected even by that careless inspection which we are disposed to give. The author who should assign, as the cause of any natural sentiment. fome principle which neither had any connexion with it, nor refembled any other principle which had some such connexion, would appear absurd and ridiculous to the most injudicious and unexperienced reader.

SECTION III.

Of the different Systems which have been formed concerning the Principle of Approbation.

INTRODUCTION.

AFTER the inquiry concerning the nature of virtue, the next question of importance in Moral Philosophy, is concerning the principle of approbation, concerning the power or faculty of the mind which renders certain characters agreeable or disagreeable to us, makes us prefer one tenor of conduct to another, denominate the one right and the other wrong, and consider the one as the object of approbation, honor, and reward; the other as that of blame, censure, and punishment.

Three different accounts have been given of this principle of approbation. According to some, we approve and disapprove both of our own actions and of those of others, from self-love only, or from some view of their tendency to our own happiness or disadvantage: according to others, reason, the same faculty by which we distinguish between truth and falshood, enables us to distinguish between what is it and unsit both in actions and affections: according to others this distinction is altogether the effect of immediate sentiment and feeling and arises from the satisfaction or disgust with

which the view of certain actions or affections infpires us. Self-love, reason, and sentiment, therefore, are the three different sources which have been assigned for the principle of approbation.

Before I proceed to give an account of those different systems, I must observe, that the determination of this second question, though of the greatest importance in speculation, is of none in practice. The question concerning the nature of virtue necessarily has some influence upon our notions of right and wrong in many particular cases. That concerning the principle of approbation can possibly have no such effect. To examine from what contrivance or mechanism within, those different notions or sentiments arise, is a mere matter of philosophical curiosity.

CHAP. I.

Of those Systems which deduce the Principle of Approbation from Self-love.

THOSE who account for the principle of approbation from felf-love, do not all account for it in the fame manner, and there is a good deal of confusion and inaccuracy in all their different systems. According to Mr. Hobbes, and many of his followers, man is driven to take refuge in society, not by any natural love which he bears to his own kind, but because without the affistance of others he is incapable of subsisting with ease or safety.

Poffendorff, Mandeville.

Society, upon this account, becomes necessary to him, and whatever tends to its support and welfare, he confiders as having a remote tendency to his own interest; and, on the contrary, whatever is likely to disturb or destroy it, he regards as in fome measure hurtful or pernicious to himself. Virtue is the great support, and vice the great disturber of human society. The former, therefore, is agreeable, and the latter offensive to every man; as from the one he foresees the prosperity, and from the other the ruin and diforder of what is fo necessary for the comfort and security of his existence.

That the tendency of virtue to promote, and of vice to disturb the order of society, when we confider it coolly and philosophically, reflects a very great beauty upon the one, and a very great deformity upon the other, cannot, as I have obferved upon a former occasion, be called in queftion. Human fociety, when we contemplate it in a certain abstract and philosophical light, appears like a great, an immense machine, whose regular and harmonious movements produce a thousand As in any other beautiful and agreeable effects. noble machine that was the production of human art, whatever tended to render its movements more fmooth and eafy, would derive a beauty from this effect, and, on the contrary, whatever tended to obstruct them would displease upon that account: fo virtue, which is, as it were, the fine polish to the wheels of society, necessarily pleases; while vice, like the vile rust, which makes them

them jar and grate upon one another, is as neceffarily offensive. This account, therefore, of the origin of approbation and disapprobation, so far as it derives them from a regard to the order of lociety. runs into that principle which gives beauty to utility, and which I have explained upon a former occasion; and it is from thence that this system derives all that appearance of probability which it possesses. When those authors describe the innumerable advantages of a cultivated and focial. above a favage and folitary life; when they expatiate upon the necessity of virtue and good order for the maintenance of the one, and demonstrate how infallibly the prevalence of vice and dilobedience to the laws tend to bring back the other, the reader is charmed with the novelty and grandeur of those views which they open to him: he fees plainly a new beauty in virtue, and a new deformity in vice, which he had never taken notice of before, and is commonly fo delighted with the discovery, that he seldom takes time to reslect. that this political view having never occurred to him in his life before, cannot possibly be the ground of that approbation and disapprobation with which he has always been accustomed to consider those different qualities.

When those authors, on the other hand, deduce from self-love the interest which we take in the welfare of society, and the esteem which upon that account we bestow upon virtue, they do not mean, that when we in this age applaud the virtue of Cato, and detest the villary of Catiline, our sentiments

VOL. II.

are influenced by the notion of any benefit we receive from the one, or of any detriment we fusfer from the other. It was not because the profperity or subversion of fociety, in those remote ages and nations, was apprehended to have any influence upon our happiness or misery in the present times; that according to those philosophers, we esteemed the virtuous, and blamed the disorderly character. They never imagined that our fentiments were influenced by any benefit or damage which we supposed actually to redound to us, from either; but by that which might have redounded to us, had we lived in those distant ages and countries; or by that which might still redound to us, if in our own times we should meet with characters of the same kind. The idea, in fhort, which those authors were groping about, but which they were never able to unfold diffinctly, was that indirect fympathy which we feel with the gratitude or refentment of those who received the benefit or fuffered the damage refulting from fuch opposite characters: and it was this which they were indistinctly pointing at, when they faid, that it was not the thought of what we had gained or fuffered which prompted our applause or indignation, but the conception or imagination of what we might gain or fuffer if we were to act in fociety with fuch affociates.

Sympathy, however, cannot, in any fense, be regarded as a selfish principle. When I sympathize with your forrow or your indignation, it may be pretended, indeed, that my emotion is founded

in felf-love, because it arises from bringing your case home to myfelf, from putting myfelf in your fituation, and thence conceiving what I should feel in the like circumstances. But though fympathy is very properly faid to arife from an imaginary change of fituations with the person principally concerned, yet this imaginary change is not supposed to happen to me in my own person and character, but in that of the person with whom I sympathize. When I condole with you for the loss of your only fon, in order to enter into your grief I do not confider what I, a person of such a character and profession, should suffer, if I had a son, and if that fon was unfortunately to die: but I confider what I should suffer if I was really you, and I not only change circumstances with you, but I change perfons and characters. My grief, therefore, is entirely upon your account, and not in the least upon my own. It is not, therefore, in the least felfish. How can that be regarded as a felfish pasfion, which does not arise even from the imagination of any thing that has befallen, or that relates to myself, in my own proper person and character, but which is entirely occupied about what relates to you? A man may fympathize with a woman in child-bed; though it is impossible that he should conceive himself as suffering her pains in his own proper person and character. That whole account of human nature, however, which deduces all fentiments and affections from felf-love, which has made so much noise in the world, but which, so far as I know, has never yet been fully and distinctly

explained, feems to me to have arisen from some confused misapprehension of the system of sympathy.

CHAP. II.

Of those Systems which make Reason the Principle of Approbation.

I T is well known to have been the doctrine of Mr. Hobbes, that a state of nature is a state of war; and that antecedent to the institution of civil government, there could be no fafe or peaceable fociety among men. To preferve fociety, therefore, according to him, was to support civil government, and to destroy civil government was the same thing as to put an end to society. But the existence of civil government depends upon the obedience that is paid to the supreme magistrate. The moment he loses his authority, all government is at an end. As felf-prefervation, therefore, teaches men to applaud whatever tends to promote the welfare of fociety, and to blame whatever is likely to hurt it; fo the same principle, if they would think and speak consistently, ought to teach them to applaud upon all occasions obedience to the civil magistrate, and to blame all disobedience and rebellion. The very ideas of laudable and blamable, ought to be the same with those of obedience and disobedience. The laws of the civil magistrate, therefore, ought to be regarded as the fole ultimate standards of what was just and unjust, of what was right and wrong.

It was the avowed intention of Mr. Hobbes. by propagating these notions, to subject the consciences of men immediately to the civil, and not to the ecclefiaftical powers, whose turbulence and ambition, he had been taught, by the example of his own times, to regard as the principal fource of the disorders of society. His doctrine, upon this account, was peculiarly offensive to theologians, who accordingly did not fail to vent their indignation against him with great asperity and bitterness. It was likewise offensive to all found moralists, as it supposed that there was no natural distinction between right and wrong, that these were mutable and changeable, and depended upon the mere arbitrary will of the civil magistrate. This account of things, therefore, was attacked from all quarters, and by all forts of weapons, by fober reason as well as by furious declamation.

In order to confute so odious a doctrine, it was necessary to prove, that antecedent to all law or positive institution, the mind was naturally endowed with a faculty, by which it distinguished in certain actions and affections, the qualities of right, laudable, and virtuous, and in others those of

wrong, blamable, and vicious.

Law, it was justly observed by Dr. Cudworth; could not be the original source of those distinctions; since upon the supposition of such a law, it must either be right to obey it, and wrong to disobey it, or indifferent whether we obeyed it,

Immutable Morality, l. z.

or disobeyed it. That law which it was indifferent whether we obeyed or disobeyed, could not, it was evident, be the source of those distinctions; neither could that which it was right to obey and wrong to disobey, since even this still supposed the antecedent notions or ideas of right and wrong, and that obedience to the law was conformable to the idea of right, and disobedience to that of wrong.

Since the mind, therefore, had a notion of those distinctions antecedent to all law, it seemed necesfarily to follow, that it derived this notion from reason, which pointed out the difference between right and wrong, in the same manner in which it did that between truth and falshood: and this conclusion, which, though true in some respects. is rather hafty in others, was more eafily received at a time when the abstract science of human nature was but in its infancy, and before the distinct offices and powers of the different faculties. of the human mind had been carefully examined and distinguished from one another. When this controversy with Mr. Hobbes was carried on with the greatest warmth and keenness, no other faculty had been thought of from which any fuch ideas could possibly be supposed to arise. It became at this time, therefore, the popular doctrine, that the effence of virtue and vice did not confift in the conformity or disagreement of human actions with the law of a fuperior, but in their conformity or disagreement with reason, which was thus confidered as the original fource and principle of approbation and disapprobation.

That virtue confifts in conformity to reason, is true in some respects, and this faculty may very justly be confidered as, in some sense, the source and principle of approbation and disapprobation. and of all folid judgments concerning right and wrong. It is by reason that we discover those general rules of justice by which we ought to regulate our actions: and it is by the fame faculty that we form those more vague and indeterminate ideas of what is prudent, of what is decent, of what is generous or noble, which we carry constantly about with us, and according to which we endeavour, as well as we can, to model the tenor of our conduct. The general maxims of morality are formed, like all other general maxims, from experience and induction. We observe in a great variety of particular cases what pleases or displeases our moral faculties, what these approve or disapprove of, and, by induction from this experience, we establish those general rules. But induction is always regarded as one of the operations of reason. From reason, therefore, we are very properly faid to derive all those general maxims and ideas. It is by thefe, however, that we regulate the greater part of our moral judgments, which would be extremely uncertain and precarious if they depended altogether upon what is liable to fo many variations as immediate fentiment and feeling, which the different states of health and humor are capable of altering fo effentially. As our most folid judgments, therefore, with regard to right and wrong, are regulated by maxims and

ideas derived from an induction of reason, virtue may very properly be said to consist in a conformity to reason, and so far this faculty may be considered as the source and principle of approbation and

disapprobation.

But though reason is undoubtedly the source of the general rules of morality, and of all the moral judgments which we form by means of them; it is altogether abfurd and unintelligible to suppose that the first perceptions of right and wrong can be derived from reason, even in those particular cases upon the experience of which the general rules are formed. These first perceptions, as well as all other experiments upon which any general rules are founded, cannot be the object of reason, but of immediate fense and feeling. It is by finding in a vast variety of instances that one tenor of conduct constantly pléases in a certain manner, and that another as constantly displeases the mind, that we form the general rules of morality. But reason cannot render any particular object either agreeable or disagreeable to the mind for its own fake. Reason may show that this object is the means of obtaining some other which is naturally. either pleasing or displeasing, and in this manner may render it either agreeable or disagreeable for the fake of something else. But nothing can be agreeable or disagreeable for its own sake, which is not rendered fuch by immediate fense and feeling. If virtue, therefore, in every particular inflance, necessarily pleases for its own sake, and if vice as certainly displeases the mind, it cannot be

reason, but immediate sense and feeling, which, in this manner, reconciles us to the one, and alienates us from the other.

Pleasure and pain are the great objects of desire and aversion: but these are distinguished not by reason, but by immediate sense and feeling. If virtue, therefore, be desirable for its own sake, and if vice be, in the same manner, the object of aversion, it cannot be reason which originally distinguishes those different qualities, but immediate sense and feeling.

As reason, however, in a certain sense, may justly be considered as the principle of approbation and disapprobation, these sentiments were, through inattention, long regarded as originally flowing from the operations of this faculty. Dr. Hutcheson had the merit of being the first who distinguished with any degree of precision in what respect all moral distinctions may be said to arise from reason, and in what respect they are founded upon immediate sense and feeling. In his illustrations upon the moral sense he has explained this so fully, and, in my opinion, fo unanswerably, that, if any controverly is still kept up about this subject, I can impute it to nothing, but either to inattention to what that gentleman has written, or to a fuperstitious attachment to certain forms of expreffion, a weakness not very uncommon among the learned, especially in subjects so deeply interesting as the present, in which a man of virtue is often loath to abandon, even the propriety of a fingle phrase which he has been accustomed to.

CHAP. III.

Of those Systems which make Sentiment the Principle of Approbation.

I HOSE fystems which make fentiment the principle of approbation may be divided into two different classes.

I. According to some the principle of approbation is founded upon a fentiment of a peculiar nature, upon a particular power of perception exerted by the mind at the view of certain actions or affections; fome of which affecting this faculty in an agreeable and others in a difagreeable manner, the former are stamped with the characters of right, laudable, and virtuous; the latter with those of wrong, blamable, and vicious. This fentiment being of a peculiar nature distinct from every other, and the effect of a particular power of perception, they give it a particular name, and call it a moral fense.

II. According to others, in order to account for the principle of approbation, there is no occasion for supposing any new power of perception which had never been heard of before: Nature, they imagine, acts here, as in all other cases, with the strictest economy, and produces a multitude of effects from one and the same cause; and sympathy, a power which has always been taken notice of, and with which the mind is manifestly endowed, is, they think, fufficient to account for all the effects ascribed to this peculiar faculty.

I. Dr. Hutcheson' had been at great pains to prove that the principle of approbation was not founded on self-love. He had demonstrated too that it could not arise from any operation of reafon. Nothing remained, he thought, but to suppose it a faculty of a peculiar kind, with which Nature had endowed the human mind, in order to produce this one particular and important effect. When self-love and reason were both excluded, it did not occur to him that there was any other known faculty of the mind which could in any respect answer this purpose.

This new power of perception he called a moral fense, and supposed it to be some-what analogous to the external senses. As the bodies around us, by affecting these in a certain manner, appear to possess the different qualities of sound, taste, odor, color; so the various affections of the human mind, by touching this particular faculty in a certain manner, appear to possess the different qualities of amiable and odious, of virtuous and

vicious, of right and wrong.

The various senses or powers of perception, from which the human mind derives all its simple ideas, were, according to this system, of two different kinds, of which the one were called the direct or antecedent, the other, the restex or consequent senses. The direct senses were those faculties from which the mind derived the perception

Inquiry concerning Virtue.

² Treatife of the Passions.

of fuch species of things as did not presuppose the antecedent perception of any other. Thus founds and colors were objects of the direct fenses. To hear a found or to fee a color does not presuppose the antecedent perception of any other quality or object. The reflex or consequent senses, on the other hand, were those faculties from which the mind derived the perception of fuch species of things as presupposed the antecedent perception of some other. Thus harmony and beauty were objects of the reflex senses. In order to perceive the harmony of a found, or the beauty of a color, we must first perceive the found or the color. The moral fense was confidered as a faculty of this kind. That faculty which Mr. Locke calls reflection, and from which he derived the simple ideas of the different passions and emotions of the human mind, was, according to Dr. Hutcheson. a direct internal sense. That faculty again by which we perceived the beauty or deformity, the virtue or vice of those different passions and emotions, was a reflex, internal fense.

Dr. Hutcheson endeavoured still further to support this doctrine, by showing that it was agreeable to the analogy of nature, and that the mind was endowed with a variety of other reslex senses exactly similar to the moral sense; such as a sense of beauty and deformity in external objects; a public sense, by which we sympathize with the happiness or misery of our fellow-creatures; a sense of shame and honor, and a sense

of ridicule.

But notwithstanding all the pains which this ingenious philosopher has taken to prove that the principle of approbation is founded in a peculiar power of perception, somewhat analogous to the external fenses, there are some consequences, which he acknowledges to follow from this doctrine, that will, perhaps, be regarded by many as a fufficient confutation of it. The qualities, he allows'. which belong to the objects of any fense, cannot, without the greatest absurdity, be ascribed to the fense itself. Who ever thought of calling the sense of feeing black or white, the fense of hearing loud or low, or the fense of tasting sweet or bitter? And, according to him, it is equally abfurd to call our moral faculties virtuous or vicious, morally good or evil. These qualities belong to the objects of those faculties, not to the faculties themselves. If any man, therefore, was so abfurdly conflituted as to approve of cruelty and injustice as the highest virtues, and to disapprove of equity and humanity as the most pitiful vices, fuch a constitution of mind might indeed be regarded as inconvenient both to the individual and to the fociety, and likewife as strange, surprising, and unnatural in itself; but it could not, without the greatest absurdity, be denominated vicious or morally evil.

Yet furely if we faw any man shouting with admiration and applause at a barbarous and unmerited execution, which some insolent tyrant

Illustrations upon the Moral Sense, sect. 1. p. 237, et seq. third edition.

had ordered, we should not think we were guilty of any great abfurdity in denominating this behaviour vicious and morally evil in the highest degree, though it expressed nothing but depraved moral faculties, or an abfurd approbation of this horrid action, as of what was noble, magnanimous, and great. Our heart, I imagine, at the fight of fuch a spectator, would forget for a while its fympathy with the fufferer, and feel nothing but; horror and detestation, at the thought of fo execrable a wretch. We should abominate him even more than the tyrant who might be goaded on by the strong passions of jealousy, fear, and refentment, and upon that account be more excusable. But the fentiments of the spectator would appear altogether without cause or motive, and therefore most perfectly and completely detestable. There is no perversion of fentiment or affection which our heart would be more averse to enter into, or which it would reject with greater hatred and indignation than one of this kind; and fo far from regarding fuch a conflitution of mind as being merely fomething strange or inconvenient. and not in any respect vicious or morally evil, we should rather consider it as the very last and most dreadful stage of moral depravity.

Correct moral fentiments, on the contrary, naturally appear in some degree laudable and morally good. The man, whose censure and applause are upon all occasions suited with the greatest accuracy to the value or unworthiness of the object, seems to deserve a degree even of moral approbation. We admire the delicate precision of his moral

fentiments: they lead our own judgments, and, upon account of their uncommon and furprifing justness, they even excite our wonder and applause. We cannot indeed be always fure that the conduct of fuch a person would be in any respect correspondent to the precision and accuracy of his judgments concerning the conduct of others. Virtue requires habit and refolution of mind, as well as delicacy of sentiment; and unfortunately the former qualities are fometimes wanting, where the latter is in the greatest perfection. This disposition of mind, however, though it may fometimes be attended with imperfections, is incompatible with any thing that is grossly criminal, and is the happiest foundation upon which the superstructure of perfect virtue can be built. There are many men who mean very well, and feriously purpose to do what they think their duty, who notwithstanding are disagreeable on account of the coarseness of their moral fentiments.

It may be faid, perhaps, that though the principle of approbation is not founded upon any power of perception that is in any respect analogous to the external senses, it may still be founded upon a peculiar sentiment which answers this one particular purpose and no other. Approbation and disapprobation, it may be pretended, are certain feelings or emotions which arise in the mind upon the view of different characters and actions; and as resentment might be called a sense of injuries, or gratitude a sense of benefits, so these may very properly receive the name of a sense of right and wrong, or of a moral sense.

But this account of things, though it may not be liable to the same objections with the foregoing, is exposed to others which are equally unanfwerable.

First of all, whatever variations any particular emotion may undergo, it still preserves the general features which diftinguish it to be an emotion of fuch a kind, and these general features are always more striking and remarkable than any variation which it may undergo in particular cases. Thus anger is an emotion of a particular kind: and accordingly its general features are always more distinguishable than all the variations it undergoes in particular cases. Anger against a man is, no doubt, somewhat different from anger against a woman, and that again from anger against a child. In each of those three cases, the general passion of anger receives a different modification from the particular character of its object, as may eafily be observed by the attentive. But still the general features of the passion predominate in all these cases. To distinguish these, requires no nice observation: a very delicate attention, on the contrary, is neceffary to discover their variations: every body takes notice of the former; scarce any body observes the latter. If approbation and disapprobation, therefore, were, like gratitude and resentment, emotions of a particular kind, diffinct from every other, we should expect that in all the variations which either of them might undergo, it would still retain the general features which mark it to be an emotion of fuch a particular kind, clear, plain, and eafily distinguishable.

distinguishable. But in fact it happens quite otherwife. If we attend to what we really feel when upon different occasions we either approve or difapprove, we shall find that our emotion in one case is often totally different from that in another, and that no common features can possibly be discovered between them. Thus the approbation with which we view a tender, delicate, and humane fentiment, is quite different from that with which we are struck by one that appears great, daring, and magnanimous. Our approbation of both may. upon different occasions, be perfect and entire; but we are softened by the one, and we are elevated by the other, and there is no fort of refemblance between the emotions which they excite in us. But, according to that fystem which I have been endeavouring to establish, this must necessarily be the case. As the emotions of the person whom we approve of, are, in those two cases, quite opposite to one another, and as our approbation arises from sympathy with those opposite emotions, what we feel upon the one occasion, can have no fort of resemblance to what we feel upon the other. But this could not happen if approbation confifted in a peculiar emotion which had nothing in common with the fentiments we approved of, but which arose at the view of those fentiments, like any other passion at the view of its proper object. The same thing holds true with regard to disapprobation. Our horror for cruelty has no fort of refemblance to our contempt for meanspiritedness. It is quite a different species of discord VOL. II.

which we feel at the view of those two different vices, between our own minds and those of the person whose sentiments and behaviour we consider.

Secondly, I have already observed, that not only the different paffions or affections of the human mind which are approved or disapproved of, appear morally good or evil, but that proper and improper approbation appear, to our natural fentiments, to be stamped with the same characters. I would ask, therefore, how it is, that, according to this fystem, we approve or disapprove of proper or improper approbation? To this question there is, I imagine, but one reasonable answer, which can possibly be given. It must be said, that when the approbation with which our neighbour regards the conduct of a third person coincides with our own, we approve of his approbation, and consider it as, in some measure, morally good; and that, on the contrary, when it does not coincide with our own fentiments. we disapprove of it, and consider it as, in fome measure, morally evil. It must be allowed. therefore, that, at least in this one case, the coincidence or opposition of sentiments, between the observer and the person observed, constitutes moral approbation or disapprobation. And if it does so in this one case, I would ask, why not in every other? to what purpose imagine a new power of perception in order to account for those fentiments?

Against every account of the principle of approbation, which makes it depend upon a peculiar fentiment, distinct from every other, I would object; that it is strange that this sentiment, which Providence undoubtedly intended to be the governing principle of human nature, should hitherto have been so little taken notice of, as not to have got a name in any language. The word moral fense is of very late formation, and cannot yet be confidered as making part of the English tongue. The word approbation has but within these few years been appropriated to denote peculiarly any thing of this kind. In propriety of language we approve of whatever is entirely to our fatisfaction, of the form of a building, of the contrivance of a machine, of the flavor of a dish of meat. The word conscience does not immediately denote any moral faculty by which we approve or disapprove. Conscience supposes, indeed, the existence of some such faculty, and properly fignifies our consciousness of having acted agreeably or contrary to its directions. When love, hatred, joy, forrow, gratitude, refentment, with fo many other passions which are all supposed to be the subjects of this principle, have made themselves considerable enough to get titles to know them by, is it not furprifing that the fovereign of them all should hitherto have been so little heeded, that, a few philosophers excepted, nobody has yet thought it worth while to bestow a name upon it.

When we approve of any character or action, the fentiments which we feel, are, according to the foregoing fystem, derived from four fources,

which are in some respects different from one another. First, we sympathize with the motives of the agent; secondly, we enter into the gratitude of those who receive the benefit of his actions; thirdly. we observe that his conduct has been agreeable to the general rules by which those two fympathies generally act; and, last of all, when we consider fuch actions as making a part of a fystem of behaviour which tends to promote the happiness either of the individual or of the fociety, they appear to derive a beauty from this utility, not unlike that which we ascribe to any well-contrived machine. After deducting, in any one particular case, all that must be acknowledged to proceed from some one or other of these four principles, I should be glad to know what remains, and I shall freely allow this overplus to be ascribed to a moral fense, or to any other peculiar faculty, provided any body will afcertain precifely what this overplus is. It might be expected, perhaps, that if there was any fuch peculiar principle, fuch as this moral sense is supposed to be, we should feel it, in some particular cases, separated and detached from every other, as we often feel joy, forrow, hope, and fear, pure and unmixed with any other emotion. This, however, I imagine, cannot even be pretended. I have never heard any inftance alledged in which this principle could be faid to exert itself alone and unmixed with fympathy or antipathy, with gratitude or relentment, with the perception of the agreement or disagreement of any action to an

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established rule, or last of all with that general taste for beauty and order which is excited by inanimated as well as by animated objects.

II. There is another fystem which attempts to account for the origin of our moral fentiments from sympathy, distinct from that which I have been endeavouring to establish. It is that which places virtue in utility, and accounts for the pleafure with which the spectator surveys the utility of any quality from sympathy with the happiness of those who are affected by it. This sympathy is different both from that by which we enter into the motives of the agent, and from that by which we go along with the gratitude of the persons who are benefited by his actions. It is the fame principle with that by which we approve of a well contrived machine. But no machine can be the object of either of those two last mentioned sympathies. I have already, in the fourth part of this discourse, given some account of this fystem.

SECTION IV.

Of the Manner in which different Authors have treated of the practical Rules of Morality.

It was observed in the third part of this discourse, that the rules of justice are the only rules of morality which are precise and accurate; that those of all the other virtues are loose, vague, and indeterminate; that the first may be compared to the rules of grammar; the others to those which critics lay down for the attainment of what is sublime and elegant in composition, and which present us rather with a general idea of the perfection we ought to aim at, than afford us any certain and infallible directions for acquiring it.

As the different rules of morality admit such different degrees of accuracy, those authors who have endeavoured to collect and digest them into systems have done it in two different manners; and one set has followed through the whole that loose method to which they were naturally directed by the consideration of one species of virtues; while another has as universally endeavoured to introduce into their precepts that sort of accuracy of which only some of them are susceptible. The first have wrote like critics, the second like grammarians.

I. The first, among whom we may count all the ancient moralists, have contented themselves with describing in a general manner the different vices and virtues, and with pointing out the deformity and misery of the one disposition as well as the propriety and happiness of the other, but have not affected to lay down many precise rules that are to hold good unexceptionably in all particular cases. They have only endeavoured to ascertain, as far as language is capable of ascertaining, first, wherein consists the sentiment of the heart, upon which each particular virtue is founded, what fort of internal feeling or emotion it is which constitutes the essence of friendship, of humanity, of generofity, of justice, of magnanimity, and of all the other virtues, as well as of the vices which are opposed to them: and, secondly, what is the general way of acting, the ordinary tone and tenor of conduct to which each of those fentiments would direct us, or how it is that a friendly, a generous, a brave, a just, and a humane man would, upon ordinary occasions, chuse to act.

To characterize the fentiment of the heart, upon which each particular virtue is founded, though it requires both a delicate and an accurate pencil, is a task, however, which may be executed with some degree of exactness. It is impossible, indeed, to express all the variations which each sentiment either does or ought to undergo, according to every possible variation of circumstances. They are endless, and language wants names to mark them by. The sentiment of friendship, for example, which we feel for an old man is different from that which we feel for a young: that which we entertain for an austere man different

from that which we feel for one of fofter and gentler manners: and that again from what we feel for one of gay vivacity and spirit. The friendthip which we conceive for a man is different from that with which a woman affects us, even where there is no mixture of any groffer passion. What author could enumerate and afcertain thefe and all the other infinite varieties which this fentiment is capable of undergoing? But still the general fentiment of friendship and familiar attachment which is common to them all', may be ascertained with a sufficient degree of accuracy. The picture which is drawn of it, though it will always be in many respects incomplete, may, however, have fuch a refemblance as to make us know the original when we meet with it, and even distinguish it from other sentiments to which it has a confiderable refemblance, fuch as goodwill, respect, esteem, admiration,

To describe, in a general manner, what is the ordinary way of acting to which each virtue would prompt us, is still more easy. It is, indeed, scarce possible to describe the internal sentiment or emotion upon which it is founded, without doing fomething of this kind. It is impossible by language to exprels, if I may fay fo, the invisible features of all the different modifications of passion as they show themselves within. There is no other way of marking and diftinguishing them from one another, but by describing the effects which they produce without, the alterations which they occasion in the countenance, in the air and external behaviour,

the resolutions they suggest, the actions they prompt to. It is thus that Cicero, in the first book of his Offices, endeavours to direct us to the practice of the four cardinal virtues, and that Aristotle in the practical parts of his Ethics, points out to us the different habits by which he would have us regulate our behaviour, such as liberality, magnificence, magnanimity, and even jocularity and good-humor, qualities which that indulgent philosopher has thought worthy of a place in the catalogue of the virtuous, though the lightness of that approbation which we naturally bestow upon them, should not seem to entitle them to so venerable a name.

Such works present us with agreeable and lively pictures of manners. By the vivacity of their descriptions they inflame our natural love of virtue. and increase our abhorrence of vice: by the justness as well as delicacy of their observations they may often help both to correct and to ascertain our natural fentiments with regard to the propriety of conduct, and fuggesting many nice and delicate attentions, form us to a more exact justness of behaviour, than what, without fuch instruction, we should have been apt to think of. In treating of the rules of morality, in this manner, confifts the science which is properly called Ethics, a science which, though like criticism it does not admit of the most accurate precision, is, however, both highly useful and agreeable. It is of all others the most susceptible of the embellishments of eloquence, and by means of them of bestowing, if that be

possible, a new importance upon the smallest rules of duty. Its precepts, when thus dressed and adorned, are capable of producing upon the slexibility of youth, the noblest and most lasting impressions, and as they fall in with the natural magnanimity of that generous age, they are able to inspire, for a time at least, the most heroic resolutions, and thus tend both to establish and confirm the best and most useful habits of which the mind of man is susceptible. Whatever precept and exhortation can do to animate us to the practice of virtue, is done by this science delivered in this manner.

II. The second set of moralists, among whom we may count all the casuists of the middle and latter ages of the christian church, as well as all those who in this and in the preceding century have treated of what is called natural jurisprudence, do not content themselves with characterizing in this general manner that tenor of conduct which they would recommend to us, but endeavour to lay down exact and precise rules for the direction of every circumstance of our behaviour. As justice is the only virtue with regard to which such that rules can properly be given; it is this virtue, that has chiefly sallen under the consideration of those two different sets of writers. They treat of it, however, in a very different manner.

Those who write upon the principles of jurisprudence, consider only what the person to whom the obligation is due, ought to think himself entitled to exact by force; what every impartial

spectator would approve of him for exacting, or what a judge or arbiter, to whom he had fubmitted his case, and who had undertaken to do him justice, ought to oblige the other person to suffer or to perform. The casuists, on the other hand, do not fo much examine what it is, that might properly be exacted by force, as what it is, that the person who owes the obligation ought to think himself bound to perform from the most sacred and fcrupulous regard to the general rules of justice, and from the most conscientious dread, either of wronging his neighbour, or of violating the integrity of his own character. It is the end of jurisprudence to prescribe rules for the decifions of judges and arbiters. It is the end of cafuistry to prescribe rules for the conduct of a good man. By observing all the rules of jurisprudence. fuppoling them ever so perfect, we should deserve nothing but to be free from external punishment. By observing those of casuistry, supposing them fuch as they ought to be, we should be entitled to confiderable praise by the exact and scrupulous delicacy of our behaviour.

It may frequently happen that a good man ought to think himself bound, from a sacred and conficientions regard to the general rules of justice, to perform many things which it would be the highest injustice to extort from him, or for any judge or arbiter to impose upon him by force. To give a trite example; a highwayman, by the fear of death, obliges a traveller to promise him a certain sum of money. Whether such a promise,

extorted in this manner by unjust force, ought to be regarded as obligatory, is a question that has

been very much debated.

If we confider it merely as a question of jurifprudence, the decision can admit of no doubt. It would be abfurd to suppose that the highwayman can be entitled to use force to constrain the other to perform. To extort the promise was a crime which deferved the highest punishment, and to extort the performance would only be adding a new crime to the former. He can complain of no injury who has been only deceived by the person by whom he might justly have been killed, To suppose that a judge ought to enforce the obligation of fuch promises, or that the magistrate ought to allow them to fustain action at law. would be the most ridiculous of all absurdities. If we consider this question, therefore, as a question of jurisprudence, we can be at no loss about the decision.

But if we consider it as a question of casuistry, it will not be so easily determined. Whether a good man, from a conscientious regard to that most facred rule of justice, which commands the observance of all serious promises, would not think himself bound to perform, is at least much more doubtful. That no regard is due to the disappointment of the wretch who brings him into this situation, that no injury is done to the robber, and consequently that nothing can be extorted by force, will admit of no sort of dispute. But whether some regard is not, in this case, due to his own dignity and honor, to the

inviolable facredness of that part of his character which makes him reverence the law of truth and abhor every thing that approaches to treachery and falshood, may, perhaps, more reasonably be made a question. The casuists accordingly are greatly divided about it. One party, with whom we may count Cicero among the ancients, among the moderns, Puffendorf, Barbeyrac his commentator, and above all the late Dr. Hutcheson, one who in most cases was by no means a loose casuift. determine, without any hefitation, that no fort of regard is due to any fuch promise, and that to think otherwise is mere weakness and superstition. Another party, among whom we may reckon * fome of the ancient fathers of the church, as well as fome very eminent modern casuists, have been of another opinion, and have judged all fuch promifes obligatory.

If we consider the matter according to the common sentiments of mankind, we shall find that some regard would be thought due even to a promise of this kind; but that it is impossible to determine how much, by any general rule that will apply to all cases without exception. The man who was quite frank and easy in making promises of this kind, and who violated them with as little ceremony, we should not chuse for our friend and companion. A gentleman who should promise a highwayman five pounds and not perform, would incur some blame. If the sum

² St. Augustin, La Placett.

promised, however, was very great, it might be more doubtful, what was proper to be done. If it was fuch, for example, that the payment of it would entirely ruin the family of the promifer. if it was fo great as to be fufficient for promoting the most useful purposes, it would appear in some measure criminal, at least extremely improper; to throw it, for the fake of a punctilio, into fuch worthless hands. The man who should beggar himself, or who should throw away a hundred thousand pounds, though he could afford that vast sum, for the sake of observing such a parole with a thief, would appear to the common fense of mankind, abfurd and extravagant in the highest degree. Such profusion would seem inconsistent with his duty, with what he owed both to himfelf and others, and what, therefore, regard to a promife extorted in this manner, could by no means authorize. To fix, however, by any precise rule, what degree of regard ought to be paid to it, or what might be the greatest sum which could be due from it, is evidently impossible. This would vary according to the characters of the persons, according to their circumstances, according to the folemnity of the promise, and even according to the incidents of the rencounter: and if the promifer had been treated with a great deal of that fort of gallantry, which is fometimes to be met with in persons of the most abandoned characters, more would feem due than upon other occasions. It may be faid in general, that exact propriety requires the observance of all such

promises, wherever it is not inconsistent with some other duties that are more facred; such as regard to the public interest, to those whom gratitude, whom natural affection, or whom the laws of proper beneficence should prompt us to provide for. But, as was formerly taken notice of, we have no precise rules to determine what external actions are due from a regard to such motives, nor, consequently, when it is that those virtues are inconsistent with the observance of such promises.

It is to be observed, however, that whenever fuch promifes are violated, though for the most necessary reasons, it is always with some degree of dishonor to the person who made them. After they are made we may be convinced of the impropriety of observing them. But still there is some fault in having made them. It is at least a departure from the highest and noblest maxims of magnanimity and honor. A brave man ought to die, rather than make a promise which he can neither keep without folly, nor violate without ignominy. For fome degree of ignominy always attends a fituation of this kind. Treachery and falshood are vices so dangerous, so dreadful, and, at the same time, such as may so easily, and, upon many occasions, so safely be indulged, that we are more jealous of them than of almost any other. Our imagination therefore attaches the idea of shame to all violations of faith, in every circumstance and in every situation. They resemble, in

this respect, the violations of chastity in the fair fex, a virtue of which, for the like reasons, we are excessively jealous; and our sentiments are not more delicate with regard to the one, than with regard to the other. Breach of chastity dishonors irretrievably. No circumstances, no folicitation can excuse it; no forrow, no repentance atone for it. We are so nice in this respect that even a rape dishonors, and the innocence of the mind cannot, in our imagination, wash out the pollution of the body. It is the same case with the violation of faith, when it has been folemnly pledged, even to the most worthless of mankind. Fidelity is so necessary a virtue, that we apprehend it in general to be due even to those to whom nothing else is due, and whom we think it lawful to kill and destroy. It is to no purpose that the person who has been guilty of the breach of it, urges that he promifed in order to fave his life, and that he broke his promise because it was inconsistent with fome other respectable duty to keep it. These circumstances may alleviate, but cannot entirely wipe out his dishonor. He appears to have been guilty of an action with which, in the imaginations of men, some degree of shame is inseparably connected. He has broke a promife which he had folemnly averred he would maintain; and his character, if not irretrievably stained and polluted, has at least a ridicule affixed to it, which it will be very difficult entirely to efface; and no man, I imagine, who had gone through an adventure

adventure of this kind would be fond of telling the story.

This instance may serve to show wherein consists the difference between casuistry and jurisprudence, even when both of them consider the obligations

of the general rules of justice.

But though this difference be real and effential, though those two sciences propose quite different ends, the sameness of the subject has made such a similarity between them, that the greater part of authors whose professed design was to treat of jurisprudence, have determined the different questions they examine, sometimes according to the principles of that science, and sometimes according to those of casuistry, without distinguishing, and, perhaps, without being themselves aware when they did the one, and when the other.

The doctrine of the casuists, however, is by no means considered to the consideration of what a conscientious regard to the general rules of justice would demand of us. It embraces many other parts of Christian and moral duty. What seems principally to have given occasion to the cultivation of this species of science was the custom of auricular confession, introduced by the Roman Catholic superstition, in times of barbarism and ignorance. By that institution, the most secret actions, and even the thoughts of every person, which could be suspected of receding in the smallest degree from the rules of Christian purity, were to be revealed to the confessor.

Vol. II.

The confessor informed his penitents whether, and in what respect they had violated their duty, and what penance it behaved them to undergo, before he could absolve them in the name of the offended Deity.

The consciousness, or even the suspicion of having done wrong, is a load upon every mind, and is accompanied with anxiety and terror in all those who are not hardened by long habits of iniquity. Men, in this, as in all other diffresses, are naturally eager to difburden themselves of the oppression which they feel upon their thoughts. by unbosoming the agony of their mind to some person whose secrecy and discretion they can confide in. The shame, which they suffer from this acknowledgment, is fully compensated by that alleviation of their uneafiness which the sympathy of their confident feldom fails to occasion. It relieves them to find that they are not altogether unworthy of regard, and that however their past conduct may be cenfured, their present disposition is at least approved of, and is perhaps sufficient to compensate the other, at least to maintain them in some degree of esteem with their friend. A numerous and artful clergy had, in those times of superstition, infinuated themselves into the confidence of almost every private family. They possessed all the little learning which the times could afford, and their manners, though in many respects rude and disorderly, were polished and regular compared with those of the age they lived in. They were regarded, therefore, not only as

the great directors of all religious, but of all moral duties. Their familiarity gave reputation to whoever was fo happy as to possels it, and every mark of their disapprobation stamped the deepest ignominy upon all who had the misfortune to fall under it. Being confidered as the great judges of right and wrong, they were naturally confulted about all scruples that occurred, and it was reputable for any person to have it known that he made those holy men the confidents of all such fecrets, and took no important or delicate step in his conduct without their advice and approbation. It was not difficult for the clergy, therefore, to get it established as a general rule, that they should be intrusted with what it had already become fashionable to intrust them, and with what they generally would have been intrusted, though no fuch rule had been established. To qualify themselves for confessors became thus a necessary part of the study of churchmen and divines, and they were thence led to collect what are called cases of conscience, nice and delicate fituations in which it is hard to determine whereabouts the propriety of conduct may lie. Such works, they imagined, might be of use both to the directors of consciences and to those who were to be directed; and hence the origin of books of casuistry.

The moral duties which fell under the confideration of the casuists were chiefly those which can, in some measure at least, be circumscribed within general rules, and of which the violation

is naturally attended with some degree of remorfe and fome dread of fuffering punishment. The defign of that inftitution which gave occasion to their works, was to appeale those terrors of conscience which attend upon the infringement of fuch duties. But it is not every virtue of which the defect is accompanied with any very fevere compunctions of this kind, and no man applies to his confessor for absolution, because he did not perform the most generous, the most friendly, or the most magnanimous action which, in his circumstances, it was possible to perform. In failures of this kind, the rule that is violated is commonly not very determinate, and is generally of fuch a nature too, that though the observance of it might entitle to honor and reward, the violation feems to expose to no positive blame. censure, or punishment. The exercise of such virtues the casuists seem to have regarded as a fort of works of supererogation, which could not be very strictly exacted, and which it was therefore unnecessary for them to treat of.

The breaches of moral duty, therefore, which came before the tribunal of the confessor, and upon that account fell under the cognizance of the casuists, were chiefly of three different kinds.

First and principally, breaches of the rules of justice. The rules here are all express, and positive, and the violation of them is naturally attended with the consciousness of deserving, and the dread of suffering punishment both from God and man.

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Secondly, breaches of the rules of chastity. These in all grosser instances are real breaches of the rules of justice, and no person can be guilty of them without doing the most unpardonable injury to some other. In smaller instances, when they amount only to a violation of those exact decorums which ought to be observed in the conversation of the two sexes, they cannot indeed justly be considered as violations of the rules of justice. They are generally, however, violations of a pretty plain rule, and, at least in one of the sexes, tend to bring ignominy upon the person who has been guilty of them, and consequently to be attended in the scrupulous with some degree of shame and contrition of mind.

Thirdly, breaches of the rules of veracity. The violation of truth, it is to be observed, is not always a breach of justice, though it is so upon many occasions, and consequently cannot always expose to any external punishment. The vice of common lying, though a most miserable meanness, may frequently do hurt to nobody, and in this case no claim of vengeance or satisfaction can be due either to the persons imposed upon, or to others. But though the violation of truth is not always a breach of justice, it is always a breach of a very plain rule, and what naturally tends to cover with shame the person who has been guilty of it.

There feems to be in young children an inflinctive disposition to believe whatever they are told. Nature feems to have judged it necessary for their preservation that they should, for some time at least, put implicit confidence in those to whom the care of their childhood, and of the earliest and most necessary parts of their education, is intrusted. Their credulity, accordingly, is excessive, and it requires long and much experience of the falshood of mankind to reduce them to a reasonable degree of diffidence and distrust. In grown-up people the degrees of credulity are, no doubt, very different. The wifest and most experienced are generally the least credulous. But the man scarce lives who is not more credulous than he ought to be, and who does not, upon many occasions, give credit to tales, which not only turn out to be perfectly false, but which a very moderate degree of reflection and attention might have taught him could not well be true. The natural disposition is always to believe. It is acquired wisdom and experience only that teach incredulity, and they very feldom teach it enough. The wifest and most cautious of us all frequently gives credit to stories which he himself is afterwards both ashamed and astonished that he could possibly think of believing.

The man whom we believe is necessarily, in the things concerning which we believe him, our leader and director, and we look up to him with a certain degree of esteem and respect. But as from admiring other people we come to wish to be admired ourselves; so from being led and directed by other people we learn to wish to become ourselves leaders and directors. And as we cannot always be satisfied merely with

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being admired, unless we can at the same time persuade ourselves that we are in some degree really worthy of admiration; so we cannot always be satisfied merely with being believed, unless we are at the same time conscious that we are really worthy of belies. As the desire of praise and that of praise-worthiness, though very much a-kin, are yet distinct and separate desires; so the desire of being believed and that of being worthy of belief, though very much a-kin too, are equally distinct and separate desires.

The defire of being believed, the defire of perfuading, of leading and directing other people, feems to be one of the strongest of all our natural defires. It is, perhaps, the instinct upon which is founded the faculty of speech, the characteristical faculty of human nature. No other animal possesses this faculty, and we cannot discover in any other animal any defire to lead and direct the judgment and conduct of its fellows. Great ambition, the defire of real superiority, of leading and directing, seems to be altogether peculiar to man, and speech is the great instrument of ambition, of real superiority, of leading and directing the judgments and conduct of other people.

It is always mortifying not to be believed, and it is doubly so when we suspect that it is because we are supposed to be unworthy of belief and capable of seriously and wilfully deceiving. To tell a man that he lies, is of all affronts the

most mortal. But whoever feriously and wilfully deceives is necessarily conscious to himself that he merits this affront, that he does not deferve to be believed, and that he forfeits all title to that fort of credit from which alone he can derive any fort of ease, comfort, or fatisfaction in the fociety of his equals. The man who had the misfortune to imagine that nobody believed a fingle word he faid, would feel himself the outcast of human fociety, would dread the very thought of going into it, or of prefenting himself before it, and could scarce fail, I think, to die of despair. It is probable, however, that no man ever had just reason to entertain this humiliating opinion of himself. The most notorious liar, I am disposed to believe, tells the fair truth at least twenty times for once that he feriously and deliberately lies; and, as in the most cautious the disposition to believe is apt to prevail over that to doubt and diftruft; fo in those who are the most regardless of truth, the natural disposition to tell it prevails upon most occasions over that to deceive, or in any respect to alter or disguise it.

We are mortified when we happen to deceive other people, though unintentionally, and from having been ourselves deceived. Though this involuntary falshood may frequently be no mark of any want of veracity, of any want of the most perfect love of truth, it is always in some degree a mark of want of judgment, of want of memory, of improper credulity, of some degree of precipitancy and rashness. It always

diminishes our authority to persuade, and always brings some degree of suspicion upon our fitness to lead and direct. The man who sometimes misleads from mistake, however, is widely different from him who is capable of wilfully deceiving. The former may safely be trusted upon many occasions; the latter very

feldom upon any.

Frankness and openness conciliate confidence. We trust the man who seems willing to trust us. We fee clearly, we think, the road by which he means to conduct us, and we abandon ourselves with pleasure to his guidance and direction. Referve and concealment, on the contrary, call forth diffidence. We are afraid to follow the man who is going we do not know where. The great pleasure of conversation and society, besides, arises from a certain correspondence of sentiments and opinions, from a certain harmony of minds, which like fo many mufical instruments coincide and keep time with one another. But this most delightful harmony cannot be obtained unless there is a free communication of fentiments and opinions. We all defire, upon this account, to feel how each other is affected, to penetrate into each other's bosoms, and to observe the fentiments and affections which really fubfift there. The man who indulges us in this natural passion, who invites us into his heart, who, as it were, fets open the gates of his breaft to us, feems to exercise a species of hospitality more

delightful than any other. No man, who is in ordinary good temper, can fail of pleafing, if he has the courage to utter his real fentiments as he feels them, and because he feels them. It is this unreferved fincerity which renders even the prattle of a child agreeable. How weak and imperfect foever the views of the open-hearted, we take pleafure to enter into them, and endeavour, as much as we can, to bring down our own understanding to the level of their capacities, and to regard every subject in the particular light in which they appear to have confidered it. This passion to discover the real sentiments of others is naturally fo ftrong, that it often degenerates into a troublesome and impertinent curiofity to pry into those secrets of our neighbours which they have very justifiable reasons for concealing; and, upon many occasions, it requires prudence and a strong sense of propriety to govern this, as well as all the other passions of human nature, and to reduce it to that pitch which any impartial spectator can approve of. To disappoint this curiosity, however, when it is kept within proper bounds, and aims at nothing which there can be any just reason for concealing, is equally disagreeable in its turn. The man who eludes our most innocent questions, who gives no satisfaction to our most inoffensive inquiries, who plainly wraps himself up in impenetrable obscurity, seems, as it were, to build a wall about his breaft. We run forward to get within it, with all the eagerness of harmless

curiofity; and feel ourselves all at once pushed back with the rudest and most offensive violence.

The man of referve and concealment, though feldom a very amiable character, is not difrespected or despised. He seems to feel coldly towards us, and we feel as coldly towards him. He is not much praised or beloved, but he is as little hated or blamed. He very feldom, however, has occasion to repent of his caution, and is generally disposed rather to value himself upon the prudence of his referve. Though his conduct, therefore, may have been very faulty, and fometimes even hurtful, he can very feldom be disposed to lay his case before the casuists, or to fancy that he has any occasion for their acquittal or approbation.

It is not always fo with the man, who, from false information, from inadvertency, from precipitancy and rashness, has involuntarily deceived. Though it should be in a matter of little consequence, in telling a piece of common news, for example, if he is a real lover of truth, he is ashamed of his own carelessness, and never fails to embrace the first opportunity of making the fullest acknowledgments. If it is in a matter of some consequence, his contrition is still greater; and if any unlucky or fatal consequence has followed from his misinformation, he can scarce ever forgive Though not guilty, he feels himself to be in the highest degree, what the ancients called, piacular, and is anxious and eager to make every fort of atonement in his power. Such a person

might frequently be disposed to lay his case before the casuists, who have in general been very favorable to him, and though they have sometimes justly condemned him for rashness, they have universally acquitted him of the ignominy of falshood.

But the man who had the most frequent occasion to consult them, was the man of equivocation and mental reservation, the man who seriously and deliberately meant to deceive, but who, at the same time, wished to flatter himself that he had really told the truth. With him they have dealt variously. When they approved very much of the motives of his deceit, they have sometimes acquitted him, though, to do them justice, they have in general and much more frequently condemned him.

The chief subjects of the works of the casuists, therefore, were the conscientious regard that is due to the rules of justice; how far we ought to respect the life and property of our neighbour; the duty of restitution, the laws of chastity and modesty, and wherein consisted what, in their language, are called the sins of concupiscence; the rules of veracity, and the obligation of oaths,

promises, and contracts of all kinds.

It may be faid in general of the works of the casuists that they attempted, to no purpose, to direct by precise rules what it belongs to feeling and sentiment only to judge of. How is it possible to ascertain by rules the exact point at which, in every case, a delicate sense of justice begins to run into a frivolous and weak scrupulosity of

conscience? When it is that secrecy and reserve begin to grow into diffimulation? How far an agreeable irony may be carried, and at what precife point it begins to degenerate into a deteftable lie? What is the highest pitch of freedom and ease of behaviour which can be regarded as graceful and becoming, and when it is that it first begins to run into a negligent and thoughtless licentiousness? With regard to all such matters, what would hold good in any one case would fcarce do so exactly in any other, and what constitutes the propriety and happiness of behaviour varies in every case with the smallest variety of fituation. Books of casuistry, therefore, are generally as ufeless as they are commonly tiresome. They could be of little use to one who should confult them upon occasion, even supposing their decisions to be just; because, notwithstanding the multitude of cases collected in them, yet upon account of the still greater variety of possible circumstances, it is a chance, if among all those cases there be found one exactly parallel to that under confideration. One, who is really anxious to do his duty, must be very weak, if he can imagine that he has much occasion for them; and with regard to one who is negligent of it, the flyle of those writings is not such as is likely to awaken him to more attention. None of them tend to animate us to what is generous and noble. None of them tend to foften us to what is gentle and humane. Many of them, on the contrary, tend rather to teach us to chicane with our

own consciences, and by their vain subtilties serve to authorize innumerable evasive refinements with regard to the most essential articles of our duty. That frivolous accuracy which they attempted to introduce into subjects which do not admit of it, almost necessarily betrayed them into those dangerous errors, and at the same time rendered their works dry and disagreeable, abounding in abstruse and metaphysical distinctions, but incapable of exciting in the heart any of those emotions which it is the principal use of books of morality to excite.

The two useful parts of moral philosophy, therefore, are Ethics and Jurisprudence: casuistry ought to be rejected altogether; and the ancient moralists appear to have judged much better, who, in treating of the same subjects, did not affect any such nice exactness, but contented themselves with describing, in a general manner, what is the sentiment upon which justice, modesty, and veracity are sounded, and what is the ordinary way of acting to which those virtues would commonly prompt us.

Something, indeed, not unlike the doctrine of the casuists, seems to have been attempted by several philosophers. There is something of this kind in the third book of Cicero's Offices, where he endeavours like a casuist to give rules for our conduct in many nice cases, in which it is disficult to determine where-abouts the point of propriety may lie. It appears too, from many passages in the same book, that several other philosophers had attempted something of the same

kind before him. Neither he nor they, however, appear to have aimed at giving a complete fystem of this fort, but only meant to show how situations may occur, in which it is doubtful, whether the highest propriety of conduct consists in observing or in receding from what, in ordinary cases, are the rules of duty.

Every system of positive law may be regarded as a more or less imperfect attempt towards a fystem of natural jurisprudence, or towards an enumeration of the particular rules of justice. As the violation of justice is what men will never fubmit to from one another, the public magistrate is under a necessity of employing the power of the commonwealth to enforce the practice of this virtue. Without this precaution, civil fociety would become a scene of bloodshed and disorder, every man revenging himself at his own hand whenever he fancied he was injured. To prevent the confufion which would attend upon every man's doing justice to himself, the magistrate, in all governments that have acquired any confiderable authority, undertakes to do justice to all, and promises to hear and to redrefs every complaint of injury. In all well-governed states too, not only judges are appointed for determining the controverses of individuals, but rules are prescribed for regulating the decisions of those judges, and these rules are, in general, intended to coincide with those of natural justice. It does not, indeed, always happen that they do so in every instance, Sometimes what is

called the constitution of the state, that is, the interest of the government; sometimes the interest of particular orders of men who tyrannize the government, warp the positive laws of the country from what natural juffice would prescribe. In some countries, the rudeness and barbarism of the people hinder the natural fentiments of justice from arriving at that accuracy and precision which, in more civilized nations, they naturally attain to. Their laws are, like their manners, gross and rude and undiftinguishing. In other countries the unfortunate constitution of their courts of judicature hinders any regular fystem of jurisprudence from ever establishing itself among them, though the improved manners of the people may be fuch as would admit of the most accurate. In no country do the decisions of positive law coincide exactly, in every case, with the rules which the natural sense of justice would dictate. Systems of positive law, therefore, though they deserve the greatest authority, as the records of the fentiments of mankind in different ages and nations, yet can never be regarded as accurate fystems of the rules of natural iustice.

It might have been expected that the reasonings of lawyers, upon the different imperfections and improvements of the laws of different countries, should have given occasion to an inquiry into what were the natural rules of justice independent of all positive institution. It might have been expected that these reasonings should have led

them to aim at establishing a system of what might properly be called natural jurisprudence, or a theory of the general principles, which ought to run through and be the foundation of the laws of all nations. But though the reasonings of lawyers did produce fomething of this kind, and though no man has treated systematically of the laws of any particular country, without intermixing in his work many observations of this fort; it was very late in the world before any fuch general fystem was thought of, or before the philosophy of law was treated of by itfelf, and without regard to the particular institutions of any one nation. In none of the ancient moralists, do we find any attempt towards a particular enumeration of the rules of justice. Cicero in his Offices, and Ariftotle in his Ethics, treat of justice in the same general manner in which they treat of all the other virtues. In the laws of Cicero and Plato, where we might naturally have expected fome attempts towards an enumeration of those rules of natural equity, which ought to be enforced by the positive laws of every country, there is, however, nothing of this kind. Their laws are laws of police, not of justice. Grotius seems to have been the first who attempted to give the world any thing like a fystem of those principles which ought to run through, and be the foundation of the laws of all nations; and his treatife of the laws of war and peace, with all its imperfections, is perhaps at this day the most complete work that has yet been given Vol. II.

upon this subject. I shall in another discourse endeavour to give an account of the general principles of law and government, and of the different revolutions they have undergone in the different ages and periods of society, not only in what concerns justice, but in what concerns police, revenue, and arms, and whatever else is the object of law. I shall not, therefore, at present enter into any further detail concerning the history of jurisprudence.

6 NO 61 THE END.

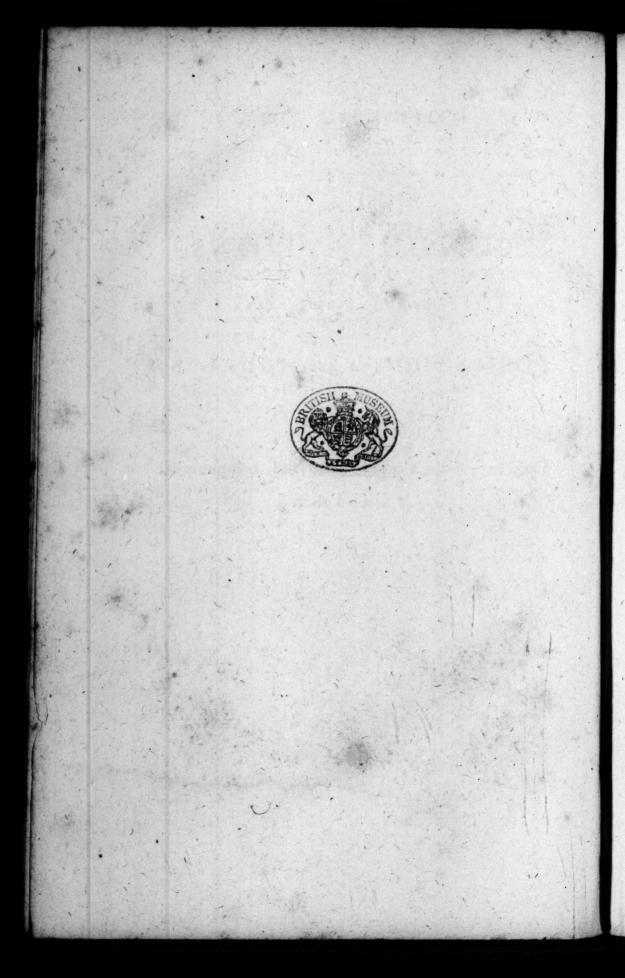
CONSIDERATIONS

CONCERNING THE FIRST

FORMATION OF LANGUAGES,

AND THE

Different Genius of original and compounded LANGUAGES.



CONSIDERATIONS

CONCERNING THE FIRST

FORMATION OF LANGUAGES,

&c. &c.

THE affignation of particular names, to denote particular objects, that is, the inflitution of nouns fubftantive, would probably, be one of the first steps towards the formation of language. Two favages, who had never been taught to speak, but had been bred up remote from the focieties of men, would naturally begin to form that language by which they would endeavour to make their mutual wants intelligible to each other, by uttering certain founds, whenever they meant to denote certain objects. Those objects only which were most familiar to them, and which they had most frequent occasion to mention, would have particular names affigned to them. The particular cave whose covering sheltered them from the weather, the particular tree whose fruit relieved their hunger, the particular fountain whose water allayed their thirst, would first be denominated by the words cave, tree, fountain, or by whatever other appellations they might think

proper, in that primitive jargon, to mark them. Afterwards, when the more enlarged experience of these savages had led them to observe, and their necessary occasions obliged them to make mention of other caves, and other trees, and other fountains, they would naturally bestow, upon each of those new objects, the same name, by which they had been accustomed to express the fimilar object they were first acquainted with, The new objects had none of them any name of its own, but each of them exactly refembled another object, which had fuch an appellation. It was impossible that those savages could behold the new objects, without recollecting the old ones; and the name of the old ones, to which the new bore fo close a resemblance. When they had occasion, therefore, to mention, or to point out to each other, any of the new objects, they would naturally utter the name of the correspondent old one, of which the idea could not fail, at that instant, to present itself to their memory in the strongest and liveliest manner. And thus, those words, which were originally the proper names of individuals, would each of them infenfibly become the common name of a multitude. A child that is just learning to speak, calls every person who comes to the house its papa or its mama; and thus bestows upon the whole species those names which it had been taught to apply to two individuals. I have known a clown, who did not know the proper name of the river which ran by his own door. It was the river, he faid, and he never heard any other name for it. His experience, it feems,

had not led him to observe any other river. The general word river, therefore, was, it is evident, in his acceptance of it, a proper name, fignifying an individual object. If this person had been carried to another river, would he not readily have called it a river? Could we suppose any person living on the banks of the Thames fo ignorant, as not to know the general word river, but to be acquainted only with the particular word Thames, if he was brought to any other river, would he not readily call it a Thames? This, in reality, is no more than what they, who are well acquainted with the general word, are very apt to do. An Englishman, describing any great river which he may have feen in some foreign country, naturally fays, that it is another Thames. The Spaniards, when they first arrived upon the coast of Mexico, and observed the wealth, populousness, and habitations of that fine country, fo much superior to the favage nations which they had been vifiting for some time before, cried out, that it was another Spain. Hence it was called New Spain; and this name has fluck to that unfortunate country ever fince. We fay, in the same manner, of a hero, that he is an Alexander; of an orator, that he is a Cicero, of a philosopher, that he is a Newton. This way of speaking, which the grammarians call an Antonomasia, and which is still extremely common, though now not at all necessary, demonstrates how much mankind are naturally disposed to give to one object the name of any other, which nearly refembles

it and thus to denominate a multitude, by what originally was intended to express an individual.

It is this application of the name of an individual to a great multitude of objects, whose refemblance naturally recalls the idea of that individual, and of the name which expresses it, that seems originally to have given occasion to the formation of those classes and affortments, which, in the schools, are called genera and species, and of which the ingenious and eloquent M. Rousseau of Geneva' finds himself so much at a loss to account for the origin. What constitutes a species is merely a number of objects, bearing a certain degree of resemblance to one another, and on that account denominated by a single appellation, which may be applied to express any one of them.

When the greater part of objects had thus been arranged under their proper classes and assortments, distinguished by such general names, it was possible that the greater part of that almost infinite number of individuals, comprehended under each particular assortment or species, could have any peculiar or proper names of their own, distinct from the general name of the species. When there was occasion, therefore, to mention any particular object, it often became necessary to distinguish it from the other objects comprehended under the same general name, either, first, by its peculiar qualities; or, secondly, by

Origine de l'Inégalité. Partie Première, p. 376, 377. Edition d'Amsterdam des Oeuvres diverses de J. J. Rousseau.

the peculiar relation which it stood in to some other things. Hence the necessary origin of two other sets of words, of which the one should

express quality; the other, relation.

Nouns adjective are the words which express quality considered as qualifying, or, as the schoolmen say, in concrete with, some particular subject. Thus the word green expresses a certain quality considered as qualifying, or as in concrete with, the particular subject to which it may be applied. Words of this kind, it is evident, may serve to distinguish particular objects from others comprehended under the same general appellation. The words green tree, for example, might serve to distinguish a particular tree from others that were withered or blasted.

Prepositions are the words which express relation confidered, in the same manner, in concrete with the co-relative object. Thus the prepositions of, to, for, with, by, above, below, &c. denote fome relation subfifting between the objects expressed by the words between which the prepositions are placed; and they denote that this relation is confidered in concrete with the co-relative object. Words of this kind ferve to distinguish particular objects from others of the same species, when those particular objects can not be so properly marked out by any peculiar qualities of their own. When we fay, the green tree of the meadow, for example, we diffinguish a particular tree, not only by the quality which belongs to it, but by the relation which it stands in to another object,

As neither quality nor relation can exist in abfiract, it is natural to suppose that the words which denote them confidered in concrete, the way in which we always fee them fubfift, would be of much earlier invention than those which express them considered in abstract, the way in which we never fee them fubfift. The words green and blue would, in all probability, be fooner invented than the words greenness and blueness; the words above and below, than the words fuperiority and inferiority. To invent words of the latter kind requires a much greater effort of abstraction than to invent those of the former. It is probable, therefore, that fuch abstract terms would be of much later institution. Accordingly, their etymologies generally show that they are so, they being generally derived from others that are concrete.

But though the invention of nouns adjective be much more natural than that of the abstract nouns substantive derived from them, it would still, however, require a considerable degree of abstraction and generalization. Those, for example, who first invented the words green, blue, red, and the other names of colors, must have observed and compared together agreat number of objects, must have remarked their resemblances and dissimilitudes in respect of the quality of color, and must have arranged them, in their own minds, into different classes and assortments, according to those resemblances and dissimilitudes. An adjective is by nature a general, and in some measure an abstract word, and necessarily

presupposes the idea of a certain species or asfortment of things, to all of which it is equally applicable. The word green could not, as we were supposing might be the case of the word cave, have been originally the name of an individual, and afterwards have become, by what grammarians call an Antonomasia, the name of a species. The word green denoting, not the name of a fubstance, but the peculiar quality of a substance, must from the very first have been a general word, and confidered as equally applicable to any other fubstance possessed of the same quality. The man who first distinguished a particular object by the epithet of green, must have observed other objects that were not green, from which he meant to separate it by this appellation. The institution of this name, therefore, supposes comparison. likewise supposes some degree of abstraction. The person who first invented this appellation must have distinguished the quality from the object to which it belonged, and must have conceived the object as capable of subfissing without the quality. The invention, therefore, even of the fimplest nouns adjective, must have required more metaphysics than we are apt to be aware of. The different mental operations, of arrangement or claffing, of comparison, and of abstraction, must all have been employed, before even the names of the different colors, the least metaphysical of all nouns adjective, could be inflituted. From all which I infer, that when languages were beginning to be formed, nouns adjective would by no means be the words of the earliest invention.

There is another expedient for denoting the different qualities of different substances, which as it requires no abstraction, nor any conceived separation of the quality from the subject, seems more natural than the invention of nouns adjective, and which, upon this account, could hardly fail, in the first formation of language, to be thought of before them. This expedient is to make some variation upon the noun substantive itself, according to the different qualities which it is endowed with. Thus, in many languages, the qualities both of fex and of the want of fex, are expressed by different terminations in the nouns substantive, which denote objects fo qualified. In Latin, for example, lupus, lupa; equus, equa; juvencus, juvenca; Julius, Julia; Lucretius, Lucretia, &c. denote the qualities of male and female in the animals and persons to whom such appellations belong, without needing the addition of any adjective for this purpose. On the other hand, the words, forum, pratum, plaustrum, denote by their peculiar termination the total absence of sex in the different substances which they stand for. Both fex, and the want of all fex, being naturally confidered as qualities modifying and inseparable from the particular substances to which they belong, it was natural to expose them rather by a modification in the noun substantive, than by any general and abstract word expressive of this particular species of quality. The expression bears, it is evident, in this way, a much more exact analogy to the idea or object which it denotes, than in the other.

The quality appears, in nature, as a modification of the substance, and as it is thus expressed, in language, by a modification of the noun substantive, which denotes that substance, the quality and the subject are, in this case, blended together, if I may fay fo, in the expression, in the same manner as they appear to be in the object and in the idea. Hence the origin of the masculine. feminine, and n utral genders, in all the ancient languages. By means of those, the most important of all distinctions, that of substances, into animated and inanimated, and that of animals into male and female, seem to have been sufficiently marked without the affiftance of adjectives, or of any general names denoting this most extensive species of qualifications.

There are no more than these three genders in any of the languages with which I am acquainted; that is to fay, the formation of nouns substantive can, by itself, and without the accompaniment of adjectives, express no other qualities but those three above mentioned, the qualities of male, of female, of neither male nor female. not, however, be furprifed, if, in other languages with which I am unacquainted, the different formations of nouns substantive should be capable of expressing many other different qualities. The different diminutives of the Italian, and of some other languages, do, in reality, fometimes, express a great variety of different modifications in the substances denoted by those nouns which undergo fuch variations.

It was impossible, however, that nouns substantive could, without losing altogether their original form, undergo fo great a number of variations, as would be fufficient to express that almost infinite variety of qualities, by which it might, upon different occasions, be necessary to specify and distinguish them. Though the different formation of nouns substantive, therefore, might, for some time, forestal the necessity of inventing nouns adjective, it was impossible that this necessity could be forestalled altogether. nouns adjective came to be invented, it was natural that they should be formed with some fimilarity to the fubftantives, to which they were to ferve as epithets or qualifications. Men would naturally give them the fame terminations with the fubstantives to which they were first applied, and from that love of similarity of found, from that delight in the returns of the fame fyllables, which is the foundation of analogy in all languages, they would be apt to vary the termination of the same adjective, according as they had occasion to apply it to a masculine, to a feminine, or to a neutral substantive. would fay, magnus lupus, magna lupa, magnum pratum, when they meant to express a great he wolf, a great she wolf, a great meadow.

This variation, in the termination of the noun adjective, according to the gender of the substantive, which takes place in all the ancient languages, seems to have been introduced chiefly for the sake of a certain similarity of sound, of a certain species of

rhyme, which is naturally fo very agreeable to the human ear. Gender, it is to be observed. cannot properly belong to a noun adjective, the fignification of which is always precifely the fame, to whatever species of substantives it is applied. When we fay, a great man, a great woman, the word great has precifely the same meaning in both cases, and the difference of the fex in the subjects to which it may be applied, makes no fort of difference in its fignification. Magnus, magna, magnum, in the same manner, are words which express precisely the same quality, and the change of the termination is accompanied with no fort of variation in the meaning. Sex and gender are qualities which belong to substances, but cannot belong to the qualities of fubstances. In general, no quality, when confidered in concrete, or as qualifying some particular subject, can itself be conceived as the subject of any other quality; though when confidered in abstract it may. No adjective therefore can qualify any other adjective. A great good man, means a man who is both great and good. Both the adjectives qualify the substantive; they do not qualify one another. On the other hand, when we fay, the great goodness of the man, the word goodness denoting a quality confidered in abstract, which may itself be the subject of other qualities, is upon that account capable of being qualified by the word great.

If the original invention of nouns adjective would be attended with so much difficulty, that of prepositions would be accompanied with yet

Every preposition, as I have already observed, denotes some relation considered in concrete with the co-relative object. The prepofition above, for example, denotes the relation of fuperiority, not in abstract, as it is expressed by the word superiority, but in concrete with some co-relative object. In this phrase, for example, the tree above the cave, the word above expresses a certain relation between the tree and the cave, and it expresses this relation in concrete with the co-relative object, the cave. A preposition always requires, in order to complete the fense, some other word to come after it; as may be observed in this particular instance. Now, I say, the original invention of fuch words would require a vet greater effort of abstraction and generalization, than that of nouns adjective. First of all, a relation is, in itself, a more metaphysical object than Nobody can be at a loss to explain what is meant by a quality; but few people will find themselves able to express, very distinctly, what is understood by a relation. Qualities are almost always the objects of our external senses; relations never are. No wonder, therefore, that the one fet of objects should be so much more comprehenfible than the other. Secondly, though prepolitions always express the relation which they stand for, in concrete with the co-relative object, they could not have originally been formed without a confiderable effort of abstraction. preposition denotes a relation, and nothing but a relation. But before men could institute a word, which -

which fignified a relation, and nothing but a relation, they must have been able, in some measure. to confider this relation abstractedly from the related objects; fince the idea of those objects does not, in any respect, enter into the fignification of the preposition. The invention of such a word, therefore, must have required a considerable degree of abstraction. Thirdly, a preposition is from its nature a general word, which, from its very first institution, must have been considered as equally applicable to denote any other fimilar relation. The man who first invented the word above, must not only have distinguished, in some measure, the relation of fuperiority from the objects which were so related, but he must also have distinguished this relation from other relations, fuch as, from the relation of inferiority denoted by the word below, from the relation of juxtaposition, expressed by the word beside, and the like. He must have conceived this word, therefore, as expressive of a particular fort or species of relation distinct from every other, which could not be done without a confiderable effort of comparison and generalization.

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Whatever were the difficulties, therefore, which embarrassed the first invention of nouns adjective, the same, and many more, must have embarrassed that of prepositions. If mankind, therefore, in the first formation of languages, seem to have, for some time, evaded the necessity of nouns adjective, by varying the termination of the names of substances, Vol. II.

according as these varied in some of their most important qualities, they would much more find themselves under the necessity of evading, by some fimilar contrivance, the yet more difficult invention of prepositions. The different cases in the ancient languages is a contrivance of precifely the fame kind. The genitive and dative cases, in Greek and Latin, evidently supply the place of the prepositions; and by a variation in the noun fubstantive, which stands for the co-relative term, express the relation which subsists between what is denoted by that noun substantive, and what is expressed by some other word in the sentence. In these expressions, for example, fructus arboris, the fruit of the tree; facer Herculi, facred to Hercules; the variations made in the co-relative words, arbor and Hercules, express the same relations which are expressed in English by the prepositions of and to.

To express a relation in this manner, did not require any effort of abstraction. It was not here expressed by a peculiar word denoting relation and nothing but relation, but by a variation upon the co-relative term. It was expressed here, as it appears in nature, not as something separated and detached, but as thoroughly mixed and blen-

ded with the co-relative object.

To express relation in this manner, did not require any effort of generalization. The words arboris and Herculi, while they involve in their fignification the same relation expressed by the English prepositions of and to, are not, like those prepositions, general words, which can be ap-

plied to express the same relation between whatever other objects it might be observed to subsist.

To express relation in this manner did not require any effort of comparison. The words arboris and Herculi are not general words intended to denote a particular species of relations which the inventors of those expressions meant, in consequence of some fort of comparison, to separate and distinguish from every other fort of relation. The example, indeed, of this contrivance would foon probably be followed, and whoever had occasion to express a similar relation between any other objects would be very apt to do it by making a fimilar variation on the name of the corelative object. This, I fay, would probably, or rather certainly happen; but it would happen without any intention or forefight in those who first set the example, and who never meant to establish any general rule. The general rule would establish itself insensibly, and by slow degrees, in consequence of that love of analogy and fimilarity of found, which is the foundation of by far the greater part of the rules of grammar.

To express relation, therefore, by a variation in the name of the co-relative object, requiring generalization, nor neither abstraction, nor comparison of any kind, would, at fuft, be much more natural and easy, than to express it by those general words called prepositions, of which the first invention must have demanded

fome degree of all those operations.

The number of cases is different in different languages. There are five in the Greek, fix in the Latin, and there are said to be ten in the Armenian language. It must have naturally happened that there should be a greater or a smaller number of cases, according as in the terminations of nouns substantive the first formers of any language happened to have established a greater or a smaller number of variations, in order to express the different relations they had occasion to take notice of, before the invention of those more general and abstract prepositions which could supply

their place.

It is, perhaps, worth while to observe that those prepositions, which in modern languages hold the place of the ancient cases, are, of all others, the most general, and abstract, and metaphyfical; and of consequence, would probably be the last invented. Ask any man of common acuteness, What relation is expressed by the preposition above? He will readily answer, that of superiority. By the preposition below? He will as quickly reply, that of inferiority. But ask him, what relation is expressed by the preposition of, and, if he has not before-hand employed his thoughts a good deal upon these subjects, you may safely allow him a week to confider of his answer. The prepositions above and below do not denote any of the relations expressed by the cases in the ancient languages. But the preposition of, denotes the fame relation, which is in them expressed by the genitive case; and which, it is easy to observe, is of

a very metaphyfical nature. The preposition of, denotes relation in general, confidered in concrete with the co-relative object. It marks that the noun fubstantive which goes before it, is fomehow or other related to that which comes after it, but without in any respect ascertaining, as is done by the preposition above, what is the peculiar nature of that relation. We often apply it, therefore, to express the most opposite relations; because, the most opposite relations agree so far that each of them comprehends in it the general idea or nature of a relation. We fay, the father of the son, and fon of the father; the fir-trees of the forest, and the forest of the fir-trees. The relation in which the father stands to the fon, is, it is evident, a quite opposite relation to that in which the fon stands to the father; that in which the parts stand to the whole, is quite opposite to that in which the whole stands to the parts. The word of, however, ferves very well to denote all those relations, because in itself it denotes no particular relation, but only relation in general; and fo far as any particular relation is collected from fuch expreffions, it is inferred by the mind, not from the preposition itself, but from the nature and arrangement of the fubfiantives, between which the preposition is placed.

What I have faid concerning the preposition of, may in some measure be applied to the prepositions to, for, with, by, and to whatever other prepositions are made use of in modern languages, to supply the place of the ancient cases. They all

of them express very abstract and metaphysical relations, which any man, who takes the trouble to try it, will find it extremely difficult to express by nouns substantive, in the same manner as we may express the relation denoted by the preposition above, by the noun substantive superiority. They all of them, however, express some specific relation, and are, confequently, none of them fo abstract as the preposition of, which may be regarded as by far the most metaphysical of all prepolitions. The prepolitions, therefore, which are capable of supplying the place of the ancient cases, being more abstract than the other prepositions, would naturally be of more difficult invention. The relations at the same time which those prepositions express, are, of all others, those which we have most frequent occasion to mention. The prepositions above, below, near, within, without, against, &c. are much more rarely made use of, in modern languages, than the prepositions of, to, for, with, from, by. A preposition of the former kind will not occur twice in a page; we can fcarce compose a fingle sentence without the affistance of one or two of the latter. If these latter prepositions, therefore, which supply the place of the cases, would be of fuch difficult invention on account of their abstractedness, some expedient, to supply their place, must have been of indispensable necessity, on account of the frequent occasion which men have to take notice of the relations which they denote, But there is no expedient fo obvious, as that of varying the termination of one of the principal words.

It is, perhaps, unnecessary to observe, that there are some of the cases in the ancient languages, which, for particular reasons, cannot be represented by any prepositions. These are the nominative, accusative, and vocative cases. In those modern languages, which do not admit of any such variety in the terminations of their nouns substantive, the correspondent relations are expressed by the place of the words, and by the order and construction of the sentence.

As men have frequently occasion to make mention of multitudes as well as of fingle objects, it became necessary that they should have some method of expressing number. Number may be expressed either by a particular word, expressing number in general, fuch as the words many, more, &c. or by fome variation upon the words which express the things numbered. It is this last expedient which mankind would probably have recourse to, in the infancy of language. Number, confidered in general, without relation to any particular fet of objects numbered, is one of the most abstract and metaphyfical ideas, which the mind of man is capable of forming; and, confequently, is not an idea, which would readily occur to rude mortals, who were just beginning to form a language. They would naturally, therefore, diftinguish when they talked of a fingle, and when they talked of a multitude of objects, not by any metaphyfical adjectives, fuch as the English a, an many, but by a variation upon the termination of the word which fignified the objects numbered.

Hence the origin of the fingular and plural numbers, in all the ancient languages; and the fame distinction has likewise been retained in all the modern languages, at least, in the greater

part of words.

All primitive and uncompounded languages feem to have a dual, as well as a plural number. This is the case of the Greek, and I am told of the Hebrew, of the Gothic, and of many other languages. In the rude beginnings of fociety, one, two, and more, might possibly be all the numeral distinctions which mankind would have any occasion to take notice of. These they would find it more natural to express, by a variation upon every particular noun substantive, than by such general and abstract words as one, two, three, four, &c. These words, though custom has rendered them familiar to us, express, perhaps, the most subtile and refined abstractions, which the mind of man is capable of forming. Let any one confider within himfelf, for example, what he means by the word three, which fignifies neither three shillings, nor three pence, nor three men, nor three horses, but three in general; and he will easily fatisfy himself that a word, which denotes so very metaphyfical an abstraction, could not be either a very obvious or a very early invention. I have read of some savage nations, whose language was capable of expressing no more than the three first numeral distinctions. But whether it expressed those distinctions by three general words, or by variations upon the nouns substantive, denoting the

things numbered, I do not remember to have met with any thing which could determine.

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As all the same relations which subsist between single, may likewise subsist between numerous objects, it is evident there would be occasion for the same number of cases in the dual and in the plural, as in the singular number. Hence the intricacy and complexness of the declensions in all the ancient languages. In the Greek there are five cases in each of the three numbers, consequently sifteen in all.

As nouns adjective, in the ancient languages, varied their terminations according to the gender of the substantive to which they were applied, so did they likewife, according to the case and the Every noun adjective in the Greek language, therefore, having three genders, and three numbers, and five cases in each number, may be confidered as having five-and-forty different variations. The first formers of language seem to have varied the termination of the adjective, according to the case and the number of the substantive, for the same reason which made them vary it according to the gender; the love of analogy, and of a certain regularity of found. In the fignification of adjectives there is neither case nor number, and the meaning of fuch words is always precifely the fame, notwithstanding all the variety of termination under which they appear. Magnus vir, magni viri, magnorum virorum; a great man, of a great man, of great men; in all these expressions the words magnus, magni, magnorum, as well as the word great,

have precisely one and the same signification, though the substantives to which they are applied have not. The difference of termination in the noun adjective is accompanied with no fort of difference in the meaning. An adjective denotes the qualification of a noun substantive. But the different relations in which that noun substantive may occasionally stand, can make no fort of difference upon its qualification.

If the declentions of the ancient languages are fo very complex, their conjugations are infinitely more fo. And the complexness of the one is founded upon the same principle with that of the other, the difficulty of forming, in the beginnings of language, abstract and general

terms.

Verbs must necessarily have been coëval with the very first attempts towards the formation of language. No affirmation can be expressed without the afsistance of some verb. We never speak but in order to express our opinion that something either is or is not. But the word denoting this event, or this matter of sact, which is the subject of our affirmation, must always be a verb.

Impersonal verbs, which express in one word a complete event, which preserve in the expression that perfect simplicity and unity, which there always is in the object and in the idea, and which suppose no abstraction, or metaphysical division of the event into its several constituent members of subject and attribute, would, in all

probability, be the species of verbs first invented, The verbs pluit, it rains: ningit, it snows; tonat, it thunders; lucet, it is day; turbatur, there is a confusion, &c. each of them express a complete affirmation, the whole of an event, with that perfect fimplicity and unity with which the mind conceives it in nature. On the contrary, the phrases, Alexander ambulat, Alexander walks; Petrus sedet, Peter sits, divide the event, as it were, into two parts, the person or subject, and the attribute, or matter of fact, affirmed of that subject. But in nature, the idea or conception of Alexander walking, is as perfectly and completely one fimple conception, as that of Alexander not walking. The division of this event, therefore, into two parts, is altogether artificial, and is the effect of the imperfection of language, which, upon this, as upon many other occasions, supplies, by a number of words, the want of one, which could express at once the whole matter of fact that was meant to be affirmed. Every body must observe how much more simplicity there is in the natural expression, pluit, than in the more artificial expressions, imber decidit, the rain falls; or tempestas est pluvia, the weather is rainy. In these two last expressions, the simple event, or matter of fact, is artificially split and divided in the one, into two; in the other, into three parts. In each of them it is expressed by a fort of grammatical circumlocution, of which the fignificancy is founded upon a certain metaphyfical analyfis of the component parts of the idea expressed by the word

pluit. The first verbs, therefore, perhaps even the first words, made use of in the beginnings of language, would in all probability be such impersonal verbs. It is observed accordingly, I am told, by the Hebrew grammarians, that the radical words of their language, from which all the others are derived, are all of them verbs, and impersonal verbs.

It is easy to conceive how, in the progress of language, those impersonal verbs should become personal. Let us suppose, for example, that the word venit, it comes, was originally an impersonal verb, and that it denoted, not the coming of fomething in general, as at present, but the coming of a particular object, fuch as the Lion. The first savage inventors of language, we shall suppose, when they observed the approach of this terrible animal, were accustomed to cry out to one another, venit, that is, the lion comes; and that this word thus expressed a complete event, without the affistance of any other. Afterwards, on the further progress of language, they had begun to give names to particular fubstances, whenever they observed the approach of any other terrible object, they would naturally join the name of that object to the word venit, and cry out, venit ursus, venit lupus. By degrees the word venit would thus come to fignify the coming of any terrible object, and not merely the coming of the lion. It would now, therefore, express, not the coming of a particular object, but the coming of an object of a particular kind. Having become more general in its fignification, it could no longer

represent any particular distinct event by itself, and without the affistance of a noun substantive, which might serve to ascertain and determine its signification. It would now, therefore, have become a personal, instead of an impersonal verb. We may easily conceive how, in the further progress of society, it might still grow more general in its signification, and come to signify, as at present, the approach of any thing whatever, whether good, bad, or indifferent.

It is probably in some such manner as this, that almost all verbs have become personal, and that mankind have learned by degrees to split and divide almost every event into a great number of metaphysical parts, expressed by the different parts of speech, variously combined in the different members of every phrase and sentence. The same sort of progress seems to have been made in the art of speaking as in the art of writing. When mankind first began to attempt to express their ideas by writing, every cha-

As the far greater part of verbs express, at present, not an event, but the attribute of an event, and, consequently, require a subject, or nominative case, to complete their signification, some grammarians, not having attended to this progress of nature, and being desirous to make their common rules quite universal, and without any exception, have insisted that all verbs required a nominative, either expressed or understood; and have, accordingly, put themselves to the torture to find some awkward nominatives to those few verbs, which still expressing a complete event, plainly admit of none. Pluit, for example, according to Sanstius, means pluvia pluit, in English, the rain rains. See Sanstii Minerva, l. 3. C. 1.

racter represented a whole word. But the number of words being almost infinite, the memory found itself quite loaded and oppressed by the multitude of characters which it was obliged to retain. Necesfity taught them, therefore, to divide words into their elements, and to invent characters which should represent, not the words themselves, but the elements of which they were composed. In consequence of this invention, every particular word came to be represented, not by one character, but by a multitude of characters; and the expression of it in writing became much more intricate and complex than before. But though particular words were thus represented by a greater number of characters, the whole language was expressed by a much smaller, and about four-andtwenty letters were found capable of supplying the place of that immense multitude of characters. which were requisite before. In the same manner, in the beginnings of language, men feem to have attempted to express every particular event, which they had occasion to take notice of, by a particular word, which expressed at once the whole of that event. But as the number of words must, in this case, have become really infinite, in consequence of the really infinite variety of events, men found themselves partly compelled by necessity, and partly conducted by nature, to divide every event into what may be called its metaphyfical elements, and to inftitute words, which should denote not so much the events, as the elements of which they were composed.

The expression of every particular event, became in this manner more intricate and complex, but the whole system of the language became more coherent, more connected, more easily retained and comprehended.

When verbs, from being originally impersonal, had thus, by the division of the event into its metaphyfical elements, become perfonal, it is natural to suppose that they would first be made use of in the third person singular. No verb is ever used impersonally in our language, nor, so far as I know, in any other modern tongue. But in the ancient languages, whenever any verb is used imperfonally, it is always in the third perfon fingular. The termination of those verbs, which are still always impersonal, is constantly the same with that of the third person fingular of personal verbs. The confideration of these circumstances, joined to the naturalness of the thing itself, may serve to convince us that verbs first became personal in what is now called the third person singular.

But as the event, or matter of fact, which is expressed by a verb, may be affirmed either of the person who speaks, or of the person who is spoken to, as well as of some third person or object, it became necessary to fall upon some method of expressing these two peculiar relations of the event. In the English language this is commonly done, by presixing, what are called the personal pronouns, to the general word which expresses the event affirmed. I came, you came, he or it came; in these phrases the event

of having come is, in the first, affirmed of the fpeaker; in the second, of the person spoken to; in the third, of some other person, or object. The first formers of language, it may be imagined, might have done the fame thing, and prefixing in the fame manner the two first personal pronouns, to the same termination of the verb, which expressed the third person singular, might have said ego venit, tu venit, as well as ille or illud venit. And I make no doubt but they would have done fo, if at the time when they had first occasion to express these relations of the verb, there had been any fuch words as either ego or tu in their language. But in this early period of the language, which we are now endeavouring to describe, it is extremely improbable that any fuch words would be known. Though custom has now rendered them familiar to us, they, both of them, express ideas extremely metaphysical and abstract. The word I, for example, is a word of a very particular Whatever speaks may denote itself by this personal pronoun. The word I, therefore, is a general word, capable of being predicated, as the logicians fay, of an infinite variety of objects. It differs, however, from all other general words in this respect; that the objects of which it may be predicated, do not form any particular species of objects distinguished from all others. The word I, does not, like the word man, denote a particular class of objects, separated from all others by peculiar qualities of their own. It is far from being the name of a species, but, on the contrary, whenever

whenever it is made use of, it always denotes a precise individual, the particular person who then speaks. It may be said to be, at once, both what the logicians call, a fingular, and what they call, a common term; and to join in its fignification the feemingly opposite qualities of the most precise individuality, and the most extensive generalization. This word, therefore, expressing so very abstract and metaphyfical an idea, would not eafily or readily occur to the first formers of language. What are called the personal pronouns, it may be obferved, are among the last words of which children learn to make use. A child, speaking of itself, says. Billy walks, Billy fits, instead of I walk, I fit. As in the beginnings of language, therefore, mankind feem to have evaded the invention of at least the more abstract prepositions, and to have expressed the fame relations which these now stand for, by varying the termination of the co-relative term. fo they likewife would naturally attempt to evade the necessity of inventing those more abstract pronouns by varying the termination of the verb. according as the event which it expressed was intended to be affirmed of the first, second, or third person. This seems, accordingly, to be the universal practice of all the ancient languages. In Latin, veni. venisti, venit, sufficiently denote, without any other addition, the different events expressed by the English phrases, I came, you came, he, or it came. The verb would, for the fame reason, vary its termination, according as the event was intended to be affirmed of the first, second, or third persons VOL. II.

plural; and what is expressed by the English phrases, we came, ye came, they came, would be denoted by the Latin words, venimus, venistis venerunt. Those primitive languages, too, which, upon account of the difficulty of inventing numeral names, had introduced a dual, as well as a plural number, into the declension of their nouns substantive, would probably, from analogy, do the same thing in the conjugations of their verbs. And thus in all those original languages, we might expect to find, at least fix, if not eight or nine variations, in the termination of every verb, according as the event which it denoted was meant to be affirmed of the first, second, or third persons singular, dual, or plural. These variations again being repeated, along with others, through all its different tenses. through all its different modes, and through all its different voices, must necessarily have rendered their conjugations still more intricate and complex than their declenfions.

Language would probably have continued upon this footing in all countries, nor would ever have grown more simple in its declensions and conjugations, had it not become more complex in its composition, in consequence of the mixture of several languages with one another, occasioned by the mixture of different nations. As long as any language was spoke by those only who learned it in their infancy, the intricacy of its declensions and conjugations could occasion no great embarrassment. The far greater part of those who had occasion to speak it, had acquired it at so very

early a period of their lives, fo infenfibly and by fuch flow degrees, that they were fcarce ever fenfible of the difficulty. But when two nations came to be mixed with one another, either by conquest or migration, the case would be very different. Each nation, in order to make itself intelligible to those with whom it was under the necessity of converfing, would be obliged to learn the language of the other. The greater part of individuals too, learning the new language, not by art, or by remounting to its rudiments and first principles, but by rote, and by what they commonly heard in conversation, would be extremely perplexed by the intricacy of its declenfions and conjugations. They would endeavour, therefore, to supply their ignorance of these, by whatever shift the language could afford them. Their ignorance of the declenfions they would naturally supply by the use of prepositions; and a Lombard, who was attempting to speak Latin, and wanted to express that such a person was a citizen of Rome, or a benefactor to Rome, if he happened not to be acquainted with the genitive and dative cases of the word Roma, would naturally express himself by prefixing the prepositions ad and de to the nominative; and instead of Rome, would say, ad Roma, and de Roma. A Roma, and di Roma, accordingly, is the manner in which the presents Italians, the descendants of the ancient Lombards and Romans, express this and all other similar relations. And in this manner prepositions seem to have been introduced, in the room of the ancient declenfions.

fame alteration has, I am informed, been produced upon the Greek language, fince the taking of Conftantinople by the Turks. The words are, in a great measure, the same as before; but the grammar is entirely lost, prepositions having come in the place of the old declensions. This change is undoubtedly a simplification of the language, in point of rudiments and principle. It introduces, instead of a great variety of declensions, one universal declension, which is the same in every word, of whatever gender, number, or termination.

A fimilar expedient enables men, in the fituation above mentioned, to get rid of almost the whole intricacy of their conjugations. There is in every language a verb, known by the name of the substantive verb; in Latin, sum; in English, I am. This verb denotes not the existence of any particular event, but existence in general. It is, upon this account, the most abstract and metaphyfical of all verbs; and, confequently, could by no means be a word of early invention. When it came to be invented, however, as it had all the tenses and modes of any other verb, by being joined with the passive participle, it wascapable of supplying the place of the whole passive voice, and of rendering this part of their conjugations as fimple and uniform, as the use of prepositions had rendered their declenfions. A Lombard, who wanted to fay, I am loved, but could not recollect the word amor, naturally endeavoured to supply his ignorance, by faying, ego fum amatus. Io sono amato, is at this day the Italian expression, which

corresponds to the English phrase above mentioned.

There is another verb, which, in the fame manner, runs through all languages, and which is diftinguished by the name of the possessive verb; in Latin, habeo; in English, I have. This verb, likewise, denotes an event of an extremely abstract and metaphyfical nature, and, confequently, cannot be supposed to have been a word of the earliest invention. When it came to be invented, however, by being applied to the paffive participle, it was capable of supplying a great part of the active voice, as the substantive verb had supplied the whole of the passive. A Lombard, who wanted to fay, I had loved, but could not recollect the word amaveram would endeavour to supply the place of it, by faying either ego habebam amatum, or ego habui amatum. Io aveva amato, or Io ebbi amato, are the correspondent Italian expressions at this day. And thus upon the intermixture of different nations with one another, the conjugations, by means of different auxiliary verbs, were made to approach towards the simplicity and uniformity of the declenfions.

In general it may be laid down for a maxim, that the more simple any language is in its composition, the more complex it must be in its declensions and conjugations; and, on the contrary, the more simple it is in its declensions and conjugations, the more complex it must be in its composition.

The Greek feems to be, in a great measure, a fimple, uncompounded language, formed from the primitive jargon of those wandering favages, the ancient Hellenians and Pelasgians, from whom the Greek nation is faid to have been descended. All the words in the Greek language are derived from about three hundred primitives, a plain evidence that the Greeks formed their language almost entirely among themselves, and that when they had occasion for a new word, they were not accustomed, as we are, to borrow it from some foreign language, but to form it, either by composition, or derivation from some other word or words, in their own. The declenfions and conjugations, therefore, of the Greek are much more complex than those of any other European language with which I am acquainted.

The Latin is a composition of the Greek and of the ancient Tuscan languages. Its declensions and conjugations accordingly are much less complex than those of the Greek; it has dropt the dual number in both. Its verbs have no optative mood distinguished by any peculiar termination. They have but one future. They have no acrist distinct from the preterit perfect; they have no middle voice; and even many of their tenses in the passive voice are eked out, in the same manner as in the modern languages, by the help of the substantive verb joined to the passive participle. In both the voices, the number of infinitives and participles is much smaller in the Latin than in the Greek.

The French and Italian languages are each of them compounded, the one of the Latin, and the language of the ancient Franks, the other of the fame Latin, and the language of the ancient Lombards. As they are both of them, therefore, more complex in their composition than the Latin, so are they likewise more simple in their declenfions and conjugations. With regard to their declenfions, they have both of them loft their cases altogether; and with regard to their conjugations, they have both of them loft the whole of the passive, and some part of the active voices of their verbs. The want of the passive voice they fupply entirely by the fubflantive verb joined to the passive participle; and they make out part of the active, in the same manner, by the help of the possessive verb and the same passive participle.

The English is compounded of the French and the ancient Saxon languages. The French was introduced into Britain by the Norman conquest, and continued, till the time of Edward III. to be the sole language of the law as well as the principal language of the court. The English, which came to be spoken afterwards, and which continues to be spoken now, is a mixture of the ancient Saxon and this Norman French. As the English language, therefore, is more complex in its composition than either the French or the Italian, so is it likewise more simple in its declensions and conjugations. Those two languages retain, at least, a part of the distinction of genders, and their adjectives vary their termination

according as they are applied to a masculine or to a feminine substantive. But there is no such distinction in the English language, whose adjectives admit of no variety of termination. French and Italian languages have, both of them, the remains of a conjugation; and all those tenses of the active voice, which cannot be expressed by the possessive verb joined to the passive participle, as well as many of those which can, are, in those languages, marked by varying the termination of the principal verb. But almost all those other tenses are in the English eked out by other auxiliary verbs, fo that there is in this language scarce even the remains of a conjugation. I love I loved, loving, are all the varieties of termination which the greater part of English verbs admit of. All the different modifications of meaning, which cannot be expressed by any of those three terminations, must be made out by different auxiliary verbs joined to some one or other of them. Two auxiliary verbs supply all the deficiencies of the French and Italian conjugations; it requires more than half a dozen to supply those of the English, which, besides the substantive and posfessive verbs, makes use of do, did; will, would; Shall, should; can, could; may, might.

It is in this manner that language becomes more simple in its rudiments and principles, just in proportion as it grows more complex in its composition, and the same thing has happened in it, which commonly happens with regard to mechanical engines. All machines are generally, when first invented, extremely complex in their principles, and there is often a particular principle of motion for every particular movement which it is intended they should perform. Succeeding improvers observe, that one principle may be so applied as to produce feveral of those movements; and thus the machine becomes gradually more and more fimple, and produces its effects with fewer wheels. and fewer principles of motion. In language, in the same manner, every case of every noun, and every tense of every verb, was originally expressed by a particular diffinct word, which ferved for this purpose and for no other. But succeeding obfervation discovered, that one set of words was capable of supplying the place of all that infinite number, and that four or five prepositions, and half a dozen auxiliary verbs, were capable of answering the end of all the declensions, and of all the conjugations in the ancient languages,

But this simplification of languages, though it arises, perhaps, from similar causes, has by no means similar effects with the correspondent simplification of machines. The simplification of machines renders them more and more perfect, but this simplification of the rudiments of languages renders them more and more imperfect, and less proper for many of the purposes of language: and

this for the following reasons.

First of all, languages are by this simplification rendered more prolix, several words having become necessary to express what could have been

expressed by a single word before. Thus the words, Dei and Deo, in the Latin, fufficiently show, without any addition, what relation the object fignified is understood to stand in to the objects expressed by the other words in the sentence. But to express the same relation in English, and in all other modern languages, we must make use of, at least, two words, and say, of God, to God. So far as the declenfions are concerned, therefore, the modern languages are much more prolix than the ancient. The difference is still greater with regard to the conjugations. What a Roman expressed by the single word, amavissem, an Englishman is obliged to express by four different words, I should have loved. It is unnecessary to take any pains to show how much this polixness must enervate the eloquence of all modern languages. How much the beauty of any expreffion depends upon its concisenes, is well known to those who have any experience in composition.

Secondly, this simplification of the principles of languages renders them less agreeable to the ear. The variety of termination in the Greek and Latin, occasioned by their declensions and conjugations, gives a sweetness to their language altogether unknown to ours, and a variety unknown to any other modern language. In point of sweetness, the Italian, perhaps, may surpass the Latin, and almost equal the Greek; but in point of va-

riety, it is greatly inferior to both.

Thirdly, this fimplification, not only renders the founds of our language less agreeable to the ear, but it also restrains us from disposing such sounds as we have, in the manner that might be most agreeable. It ties down many words to a particular situation, though they might often be placed in another with much more beauty. In the Greek and Latin, though the adjective and substantive were separated from one another, the correspondence of their terminations still showed their mutual reference, and the separation did not necessarily occasion any sort of consusion. Thus in the first line of Virgil,

Tityre tu patulæ recubans sub tegmine fagi;

we easily see that tu refers to recubans, and patule to fagi; though the related words are separated from one another by the intervention of feveral others; because the terminations, showing the correspondence of their cases, determine their mutual reference. But if we were to translate this line literally into English, and say, Tityrus, thou of spreading reclining under the shade beech, OEdipus himself could not make sense of it, because there is here no difference of termination, to determine which fubstantive each adjective belongs to. It is the same case with regard to verbs. In Latin the verb may often be placed, without any inconveniency or ambiguity, in any part of the fentence. But as in English its place is almost always precifely determined. It must follow the subjective and precede the objective member of the phrase in almost all cases. Thus in Latin whether you

fay, Joannem verberavit Robertus, or Robertus verberavit Joannem, the meaning is precifely the same, and the termination fixes John to be the sufferer in both cases. But in English John beat Robert, and Robert beat John, have by no means the same signification. The place therefore of the three principal members of the phrase is in the English, and for the same reason in the French and Italian languages, almost always precisely determined; whereas in the ancient languages a greater latitude is allowed, and the place of those members is often, in a great measure, indifferent. We must have recourse to Horace, in order to interpret some parts of Milton's literal translation;

Who new enjoys thee credulous all gold,
Who always vacant, always amiable
Hopes thee; of flattering gales
Unmindful —

are verses which it is impossible to interpret by any rules of our language. There are no rules in our language, by which any man could discover, that, in the first line, credulous referred to who, and not to thee; or that all gold referred to any thing; or, that in the fourth line, unmindful, referred to who, in the second, and not to thee in the third; or, on the contrary, that, in the second line, always vacant, always amiable, referred to thee in the third, and not to who in the same line with it. In the Latin, indeed, all this is abundantly plain.

Qui nunc te fruitur credulus aureà, Qui semper vacuam, semper amabilem Sperat te; nescius auræ fallacis. Because the terminations in the Latin determine the reference of each adjective to its proper fubstantive, which it is impossible for any thing in the English to do. How much this power of transposing the order of their words must have facilitated the composition of the ancients, both in verse and prose, can hardly be imagined. That it must greatly have facilitated their versification it is needless to observe; and in prose, whatever beauty depends upon the arrangement and construction of the feveral members of the period, must to them have been acquirable with much more ease, and to much greater perfection, than it can be to those whose expression is constantly confined by the prolixness, constraint, and monotony of modern languages.

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